Encounter

edited by Melvin J Lasky & Frank Kermode

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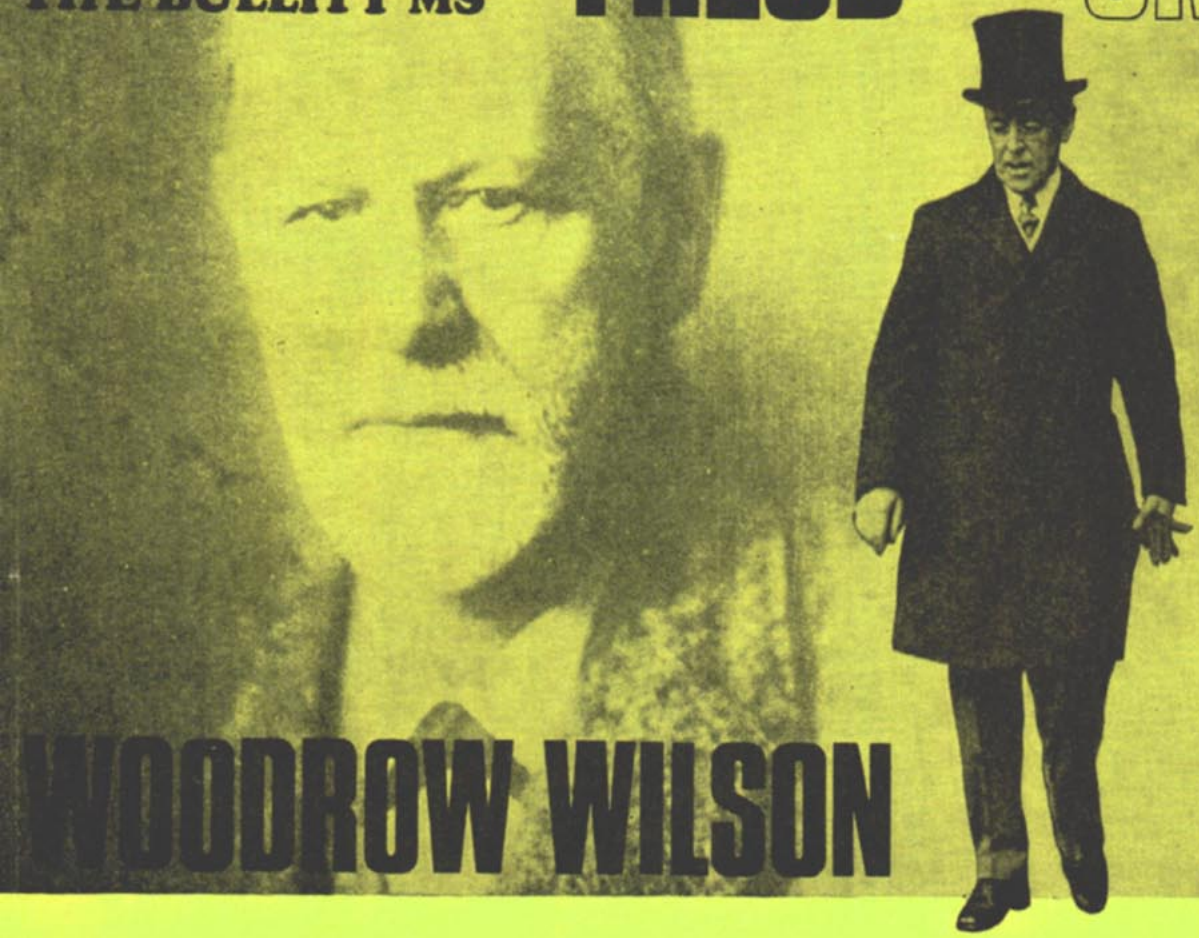
THE BULLITT MS

FREUD ON WOODROW WILSON



Some time before he died Freud completed—with the collaboration of US Ambassador William Bullitt—a psycho-analytic study of the 28th President of the United States, of his childhood, his politic[illegible] and especially his tragic role at the end of World War 1 at the Versailles peace-table. The manuscript, withheld for thirty years, is now being published for the first time.

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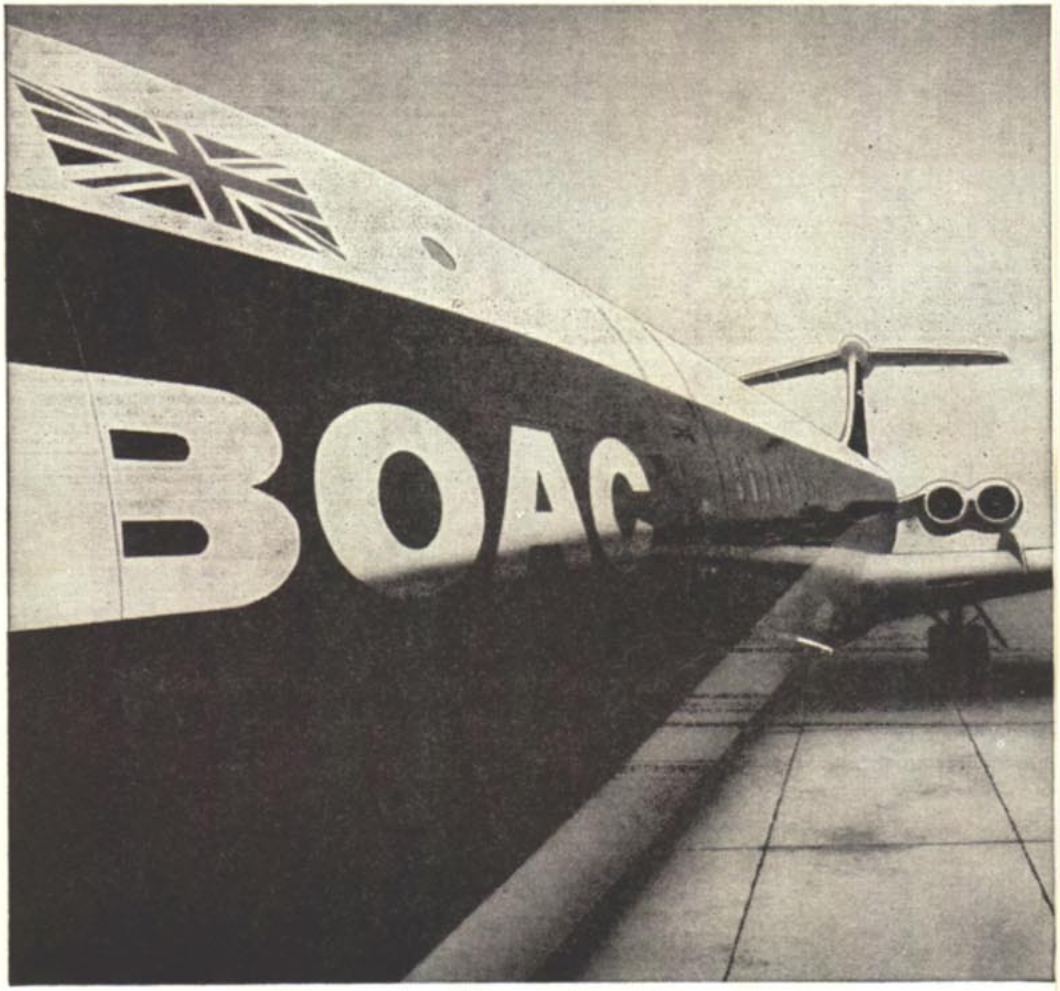

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JANUARY 1967
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Sigmund Freud and W. C. Bullitt

Woodrow Wilson

Introduction

By SIGMUND FREUD

WHEN AN AUTHOR publishes his opinion of an historical personage, he seldom neglects to assure his readers at the outset that he has endeavoured to keep himself free from bias and prejudice, that he has worked *sine ira et studio,* as the beautiful classic phrase expresses it. I must, however, commence my contribution to this psychological study of Thomas Woodrow Wilson with the confession that the figure of the American President, as it rose

THIS *is a manuscript we have been pursuing for ten years, ever since we first heard of an unpublished—some said "suppressed"—text of Sigmund Freud. In the third volume of his biography of Freud (1957), Dr. Ernest Jones wrote: "It was during this stay in Berlin [1930] that the American Ambassador, W. C. Bullitt, persuaded Freud to co-operate with him in writing a psycho-analytic study of President Wilson. They completed the book, which will be published at a suitable time, and I have been the only person privileged to read it...." The recent death of Woodrow Wilson's widow has made publication of this manuscript possible for the first time. We will also be printing, in a subsequent number, comments by an historian and a psychologist. Our two instalments are based on the opening and concluding sections of the book which will shortly be published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson (and by Houghton Mifflin in the U.S.A.).*

As Bullitt tells the story (we called on him recently in his Massachusetts farmhouse), he visited Freud who had been in Berlin for a minor operation and chatted with him about his own book of diplomatic memoirs. Freud appeared very much interested, so much so that he volunteered to collaborate with Bullitt in the writing of the Wilson chapter. "I thought the idea was delightful," Bullitt recalls, "but bizarre.... To bury Freud on Wilson in a chapter of my book would be to produce an impossible monstrosity; the part would be greater than the whole...." Freud apparently persisted; he had been dissatisfied with his studies of Leonardo and Michelangelo, and apparently longed for an opportunity to draw larger conclusions from a plethora of facts. (He also made the curious confession to Bullitt that he had been interested in Wilson "ever since he had discovered that they were both born in 1856"!)

The completion of the book was to take almost ten years. Bullitt was responsible for the research but, he observes, "Freud read all that I considered worthy of his attention." Some 1,500 typewritten pages of notes (including interviews and unpublished letters and diaries) were submitted to Freud in Vienna. Draft chapters were exchanged for emendation and approval. Much remained unclear and in the dark, and they came to the conclusion that on many points they would not be ashamed to admit their ignorance: "To learn to say 'I don't know' is the beginning of intellectual integrity...."

"We often disagreed," Bullitt said, "but we never quarrelled." Still, a disagreement (over what? I couldn't find out: the Ambassador was being discreet or forgetful or both) postponed the completion of the book for many years. When in 1938 Freud was forced by the Nazis to leave Vienna, Bullitt met him at the railroad station in Paris, suggested that perhaps the final version could be worked on in London. This was the last year of Freud's life, and before he died in 1939 there was a mutually agreed manuscript, signed by both, but which was not to be published so long as the second Mrs. Woodrow Wilson lived. Bullitt deposited the final autographed text in an official vault of a Washington archive, guarded by a U.S. Marine.

Alas, none of the earlier drafts are available. When I asked Bullitt about letters, manuscripts, rough outlines (in English? in German?) he told me that they all had been "left and lost in Vienna." How fascinating the scribbled interlineations in the hand of the master might have been! Still, we must gratefully acknowledge the emergence of this unknown text by Freud like the finding of some lost or long-forgotten ancient fragment of a classic.

M. J. L.

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above the horizon of Europeans, was from the beginning unsympathetic to me, and that this aversion increased in the course of years the more I learned about him and the more severely we suffered from the consequences of his intrusion into our destiny.

With increasing acquaintance it was not difficult to find good reasons to support this antipathy. It was reported that Wilson, as President-elect, shook off one of the politicians who called attention to his services during the presidential campaign with the words: "God ordained that I should be the next President of the United States. Neither you nor any other mortal or mortals could have prevented it." The politician was McCombs, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. I do not know how to avoid the conclusion that a man who is capable of taking the illusions of religion so literally and is so sure of a special personal intimacy with the Almighty is unfitted for relations with ordinary children of men. As everyone knows, the hostile camp during the war also sheltered a chosen darling of Providence: the German Kaiser. It was most regrettable that later on the other side a second appeared. No one gained thereby: respect for God was not increased.

Another obvious peculiarity of the President, to which he himself often called attention, is largely to blame for the fact that we do not know how to begin to grasp his personality but feel it an exotic in our world. Through a long laborious evolution we have learned to set frontiers between our psychic inner world and an outer world of reality. The latter we can understand only as we observe it, study it and collect discoveries about it. In this labour it has not been easy for us to renounce explanations which fulfilled our wishes and confirmed our illusions. But this self-conquest has repaid us. It has led us to an undreamed-of mastery over nature.

Recently we have begun to apply the same procedure to the content of our psychic inner world. Thereby even higher demands have been made upon our self-criticism and our respect for facts. In this field also we expect a like success. The wider and deeper becomes our knowledge of the inner life, the more will our power increase to hold in check and guide our original desires. Wilson, on the contrary, repeatedly declared that mere facts had no significance for him, that he esteemed highly nothing but human motives and opinions. As a result of this attitude it was natural for him in his thinking to ignore the facts of the real outer world, even to deny they existed if they conflicted with his hopes and wishes. He, therefore, lacked motive to reduce his ignorance by learning facts. Nothing mattered except noble intentions. As a result, when he crossed the ocean to bring to war-torn Europe a just and lasting peace, he put himself in the deplorable position of the benefactor who wishes to restore the eyesight of a patient but does not know the construction of the eye and has neglected to learn the necessary methods of operation.

This same habit of thought is probably responsible for the insincerity, unreliability and tendency to deny the truth which appear in Wilson's contacts with other men and are always so shocking in an idealist. The compulsion to speak the truth must indeed be solidified by ethics but it is founded upon respect for fact.

I must also express the belief that there was an intimate connection between Wilson's alienation from the world of reality and his religious convictions. Many bits of his public activity almost produce the impression of the method of Christian Science applied to politics. God is good, illness is evil. Illness contradicts the nature of God. Therefore, since God exists, illness does not exist. There is no illness. Who would expect a healer of this school to take an interest in symptomatology and diagnosis?

Let me now return to the starting point of these observations, to the avowal of my antipathy to Wilson, in order to add a word of justification. We all know that we are not fully responsible for the results of our acts. We act with a certain intention; then our act produces results which we did not intend and could not have foreseen. Thus often we reap more blame and disrepute, and occasionally more praise and honour than we deserve. But when, like Wilson, a man achieves almost the exact opposite of that which he wished to accomplish, when he has shown himself to be the true antithesis of the power which "always desires evil and always creates good," when a pretension to free the world from evil ends only in a new proof of the danger of a fanatic to the commonweal, then it is not to be marvelled at that a distrust is aroused in the observer which makes sympathy impossible.

To be sure, when I was led through the influence of Bullitt to a more thorough study of the life of the President, this emotion did not remain unchanged. A measure of sympathy developed; but sympathy of a special sort mixed with pity, much as one feels when reading Cervantes for his hero, the naïve cavalier of La Mancha. And finally when one compared the strength of the man to the greatness of the task which he had taken upon himself this pity was so overwhelming that it conquered every other emotion. Thus, in the end, I am

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able to ask the reader not to reject the work which follows as a product of prejudice. Although it did not originate without the participation of strong emotions, those emotions underwent a thorough subjugation. And I can promise the same for William C. Bullitt, as whose collaborator I appear in this book.

Bullitt, who knew the President personally, who worked for him during the period of his great prominence, and at that time was devoted to him with all the enthusiasm of youth, has prepared a digest of data on Wilson's childhood and youth. For the analytic part we are both equally responsible; it has been written by us working together.

A FEW FURTHER explanations seem desirable. The reader may perhaps object that our work is presented to him as a "Psychological Study" although we have employed the psycho-analytic method in examining our subject and have used psycho-analytic hypotheses and terms without restriction. This is not a misrepresentation made in deference to the prejudice of the public. On the contrary our title "a Psychological Study" expresses our conviction that psychoanalysis is nothing but psychology, one of the parts of psychology, and that one does not need to apologise for employing analytic methods in a psychological study which is concerned with the deeper psychic facts.

To publish the results of such a study of deep psychic mechanisms and to expose them to public curiosity so long as the individual concerned lives is certainly inadmissible. That the subject would consent to publication during his lifetime is altogether unlikely. Therapeutic analyses are carried on between physician and patient under the pledge of professional secrecy, all third persons being excluded. When, however, an individual whose life and works are of significance to the present and future has died, he becomes by common consent a proper subject for biography and previous limitations no longer exist. The question of a period of post-mortem immunity from biographical study might then arise, but such a question has rarely been raised. It would not be easy to achieve agreement as to the duration of such a period or to insure its observation. Thomas Woodrow Wilson died in the year 1924.

Finally we must attack the misconception that we have written this book with a secret purpose to prove that Wilson was a pathological character, an abnormal man, in order to undermine in this roundabout way esteem for his achievements. No! That is not our intention. And, even if it were, our book could achieve no such effect. For belief in a stiff frame of normality and a sharp line of demarcation between normal and abnormal in the psychic life has long since been abandoned by our science. An increasingly delicate technique of diagnosis has shown us all sorts of neuroses where we least expected to find them; so that the statement is almost justified that neurotic symptoms and inhibitions have to a certain extent become common to all civilised human beings. We even believe that we understand the exigency which has produced this phenomenon.

Furthermore, we have been compelled to conclude that for the judgment of psychic events the category *normal-pathological* is as inadequate as the earlier all-inclusive category *good-bad*. Only in a minority of cases may psychic disturbances be traced back to inflammations or the introduction of toxic substances into the organism; and even in these cases the effect of these factors is not direct. In the majority of cases quantitative factors produce the eruption of pathological results: factors such as exceptionally strong stimuli applied to a certain part of the psychic apparatus, a greater or less supply of those internal secretions which are indispensable for the functioning of the nervous system, disturbances in point of time, precocious or retarded development of the psychic life.

We again find this sort of quantitative causation when, with the help of psychoanalysis, we study what now seems to us the elementary material of psychic phenomena. The relative strength of any one of the many instincts which supply the psychic energy, the especial depth of one of those identifications upon which ordinarily the character is constructed, an exceptionally strong reaction-formation against which an impulse must be repressed; such quantitative factors decide the final form of a personality, stamp upon it a certain individuality, and direct its activity into a certain channel.

IN HIS DESCRIPTION of the dead Brutus, Shakespeare's Marc Antony says:

... the elements
So mixed in him that nature might stand up
And say to all the world: "This was a man!"

As a footnote to these words of the poet we are tempted to declare that the elements of the psychic constitution are always the same. What changes in the mixture is the quantitative proportion of the elements, and we must add, their location in different fields of the psychic life and their attachment to different objects. According to certain criteria we then evaluate the personality of the individual as normal or pathological or as exhibiting pathological traits. But these criteria are in no way uniform, reliable, or constant. They are difficult to grasp scientifically, for at bottom they are only prac-

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tical aids, often of conventional origin. "Normal" usually means merely average or close to average. Our judgment of whether or not a character trait or an action is to be considered pathological is often determined by the standard of whether or not it is injurious to the individual or to the community of which he is a member. In spite of the vagueness of these concepts and the uncertainty of the fundamental principles upon which judgment is based we cannot in practical life do without the distinction between normal and pathological; but we should not be amazed if this distinction does not fit other important antitheses.

Fools, visionaries, sufferers from delusions, neurotics and lunatics have played great roles at all times in the history of mankind, and not merely when the accident of birth has bequeathed them sovereignty. Usually they have wreaked havoc; but not always. Such persons have exercised far-reaching influence upon their own and later times, they have given impetus to important cultural movements and have made great discoveries. They have been able to accomplish such achievements on the one hand through the help of the intact portion of their personalities, that is to say in spite of their abnormalities; but on the other hand it is often precisely the pathological traits of their characters, the one-sideness of their development, the abnormal strengthening of certain desires, the uncritical and unrestrained abandonment to a single aim, which gives them the power to drag others after them and to overcome the resistance of the world.

So frequently does great achievement accompany psychic abnormality that one is tempted to believe that they are inseparable from each other. This assumption is, however, contradicted by the fact that in all fields of human endeavour great men are to be found who fulfil the demands of normality.

WITH THESE REMARKS we hope that we have allayed the suspicion that this book is anything more than a psychological study of Thomas Woodrow Wilson. We cannot, however, deny that, in this case as in all cases, a more intimate knowledge of a man may lead to a more exact estimate of his achievements.

Darkness and Light

MANY BOOKS have been written about Thomas Woodrow Wilson and many of his friends have attempted to explain him to themselves and to others. The explanations have one quality in common: they end with a note of uncertainty. Wilson remains, even to his biographers and intimates, a character of contradictions, an enigma. On June 10, 1919, in the final month of the Peace Conference, Colonel House recorded in his diary:

> I think I never knew a man whose general appearance changed so much from hour to hour. It is not the President's face alone that changes. He is one of the most difficult and complex characters I have ever known. He is so contradictory that it is hard to pass judgment upon him.

To this conclusion with greater or less emphasis, all Wilson's intimates and biographers come at last.

Wilson was, indeed, complex; and it will not be easy to discover the clue to the unity underlying the apparent contradictions of his character. Moreover, we should not set out with false hopes. We shall never be able to achieve a full analysis of his character. About many parts of his life and nature we know nothing. The facts we know seem less important than those we do not know. All the facts we should like to know could be discovered only if he were alive and would submit to psycho-analysis. He is dead. No one will ever know these facts. We cannot, therefore, hope to comprehend the decisive events of his psychic life either in all their details or in all their connections. We cannot, consequently, call this work a psycho-analysis of Wilson. It is a psychological study based upon such material as is now available, nothing more.

On the other hand, we do not wish to underestimate the evidence we possess. We know much about many aspects of Wilson's life and character. We must give up hope of full analysis; but we know enough about him to justify the hope that we may be able to trace the main path of his psychic development. To the facts we know about him as an individual we shall add the facts which psycho-analysis has found to be true with regard to all human beings.

To say this is not to say that psycho-analysis has revealed the ultimate mysteries of human life. It has, so to speak, opened the door which leads to the inner life of man and has allowed

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us to recognise the existence of a few objects which lie close to the door, though the objects which lie deeper are still veiled in obscurity. It has let a little light into the darkness, so that we are now able to distinguish the outlines of certain objects in the murk. We can describe certain mechanisms that are used by the ultimate reality which we cannot describe. Our science is still very young, and further research will doubtless prove that the lines with which we now attempt to delineate those objects have not been altogether truly drawn. But our expectation that the details of present conceptions will later have to be modified should not prevent us from using the conceptions we now have. The work of Newton was not rendered useless because Einstein followed; and had it not been for Newton there would probably not have been an Einstein.

"Little Tommy"

CONSIDER the human being who was born in the Manse at Staunton, Virginia, on December 28, 1856, and passed his childhood in the Manse at Augusta, Georgia.

The only son of his father and mother, sickly, nursed, coddled and loved by father, mother, and sisters, it would have been remarkable if he had avoided a great concentration of interest on himself. He did, in fact, greatly love himself always. We can find no evidence that he was over-deficient in admiration for himself or in attention to his own aggrandisement.

Moreover, as we shall see later, to be happy he had to have a representative of himself to love. Through this love he achieved an additional outlet for the abundant charge of his libido which dwelt in narcissism. Unquestionably a large portion of his libido continued throughout life to find outlet through narcissism—even of the portion which discharged itself through love-objects.

There are two forms of object-choice: direct and narcissistic. In the direct form of object-choice the libido flows directly to some outside person: to the child's mother or father or brother or sister or other person. The object is valued for itself, for its own personality, however little that personality may resemble the personality of the child. This sort of object-choice we call love of the "leaning" type because the child first "leans" or "props" his sexual instincts against his self-preservative instincts and first chooses as his love-objects the same persons who satisfy his physical needs. On the other hand, in the narcissistic type of object-choice, the child's libido flows to an outside person who in some way resembles himself. He loves the portion of himself which he sees in the object. He does not love the object for the qualities in which the object differs from himself but only for the qualities in which the object resembles himself. Thus, through an object he loves himself, and his narcissism finds in this roundabout way an additional outlet.

We shall see later that Wilson made frequent use of the narcissistic type of object-choice. Nevertheless, he was not one of the unfortunates whose libido finds outlet through narcissism alone. His narcissism, preserved from childhood, contained perhaps a greater charge of libido than is usual, but not an abnormally great charge. A considerable portion of his libido found outlet as it does in all normal men by way of active and passive object relations.

WITH REGARD TO Wilson's childhood, let us merely recall that one fact stands out with such prominence that it dwarfs all the rest; the fact that Tommy Wilson's father was his great love-object. His father was the great figure of his childhood. In comparison, his mother was a very small figure indeed. It is clear that much more of Wilson's libido found outlet through his relationship to his father than found outlet through his relationship to his mother. We should, therefore, expect that the task of his ego in reconciling his conflicting desires with regard to his father would be more difficult than the task of his ego in reconciling his conflicting desires with regard to his mother. That proved to be true. His ego achieved easily a reconciliation of his conflicting desires with regard to his mother. His relations to women became normal and commonplace; but his ego was never able to achieve a reconciliation of his conflicting desires with regard to his father.

The reader may perhaps be inclined to remark that Wilson's desires with regard to his father were not in conflict, that never in his life by any thought, word, or act did Wilson express hostility to his father, that while an extraordinarily large proportion of Wilson's libido charged his passivity to his father, none whatever charged aggressive activity toward his father. The reply to this is simple: Wilson was a human being and subject to the same laws of development as all other human beings. He

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was certainly not one of those unfortunate men who is born with no masculinity. And the analysis of thousands of men has proved that the libido charges both aggressive and passive desires with regard to its love-objects. There can be no question whatever that the proportion of Wilson's libido which charged passivity to his father was enormous, and we are therefore obliged to conclude that a considerable portion of his libido must have found storage in aggressive activity toward his father. If we can find in his life no direct expression of hostility toward his father, we must look for evidence of indirect expression of hostility to his father. We know that hostility to his father must have existed and must eventually have found some sort of expression. In point of fact, nearly all the unusual features of Wilson's character were developed from the repressions, identifications and sublimations which his ego employed in its attempt to reconcile his aggressive activity toward his father with his overwhelming passivity to his father. Wilson's relationship to his father and to father representatives will, therefore, necessarily occupy the greater part of our study of his character.

LITTLE BOYS who have sisters possess an enormous advantage over little boys who have no sisters. Sisters form a bridge over which the libido may be transferred easily from the mother to women outside the family. The ego of a little boy who has no sister is compelled to force his libido to cross with one leap the chasm between his mother and the outside world. The little boy who has a sister normally transfers to the sister a portion of the libido which has been attached to his mother, and from the sister transfers it to friends of the sister. Thus, by easy transfers, his libido reaches women outside the family. The ego of a little boy who has no sister is compelled to transfer his libido directly from the mother to some woman outside the family, which is a much more difficult task, and, to many men, presents an insuperable difficulty. The libido of such men may remain fixed on the mother throughout life. They are incapable of detaching themselves from the mother. If, in one way or another, the mother is lost, the unfortunate son not rarely replaces the lost mother by identification of himself with the mother and gives to other men who represent himself the love that he desired to receive from his own mother.

TOMMY WILSON was especially fortunate. The path to women outside his family was made exceptionally broad and smooth by the existence not only of sisters who loved him deeply and took care of him and played with him but also of little girl cousins who loved him. A large part of his libido remained attached to his mother throughout his boyhood and youth but a part also passed to his sisters and cousins. His passivity to his mother seems to have clung to her, indeed, for an exceptionally long time, longer perhaps than his activity. In this connection the letter Wilson wrote to his wife in 1888 is worth a glance:

> I remember how I clung to her (a laughed-at "mama's boy") till I was a great big fellow; but love of the best womanhood came to me and entered my heart through those apron strings. If I had not lived with such a mother, I could not have won and seemed to deserve—in part, perhaps, deserved through transmitted virtues—such a wife.

The fact that so soon after the death of his first wife, with whom he had lived in intimate marriage for twenty-nine years, he married another wife should not cause anyone to doubt his love for Ellen Axson. Experience teaches that men who have been happily married are apt to marry again. The speed with which he remarried nevertheless indicates how indispensable to him, entirely apart from personality, was a mother-substitute.

His activity toward his mother, and with it of course some of his passivity, seems to have passed at an early age to his older sisters, especially to his sister Anne who was two years older than he and loved him as deeply as he loved her. He liked to play with these sisters and their little girl friends, especially with a little girl cousin who was younger than he and bore his mother's name: Jessie Woodrow Bones.

The extent to which like names produce identifications in the unconscious can scarcely be appreciated by one who has not made a special study of the subject. It seems almost certain that little Tommy Wilson identified Jessie Woodrow Bones with his mother, Jessie Woodrow, and transferred to her, from his sister Anne, a considerable portion of the libido which originally had been directed toward his mother. He was fond of playing "Indians" with this little girl, and one day when she was up a tree pretending that she was a squirrel, he, the Indian hunter, shot an arrow from his bow into her body. She fell to the ground unconscious

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but uninjured and Tommy carried her into the house crying out in wild remorse: "I'm a murderer. It wasn't an accident. I killed her."

One should not place too much emphasis on such incidents; but we find it impossible to avoid the impression that this episode indicates that by the time Tommy Wilson was eleven years old his ego had successfully transferred a considerable portion of his activity toward his mother to Jessie Woodrow Bones, and that he was well started along the road to normal relations with women. Had it been otherwise, he would have felt less exaggerated remorse. His libido did not become completely detached from his mother until after his marriage to Ellen Axson seventeen years later; but by the time he was eleven, the detachment had already proceeded so far that there was little danger of his being driven back to entire dependence upon his mother. Thus before his adolescence his ego had so nearly solved the minor dilemma of Oedipus complex that there was every reason to expect that his relations with women would be normal throughout life. They were. For that he had to thank his sisters and his cousin Jessie Woodrow Bones.

THE FACTS with regard to Wilson's childhood relationship to his father present a remarkable picture of adoration. Many little boys adore their fathers: but not many adore so intensely and completely as did Tommy Wilson. The child's earliest memory was of running to his father to ask for an explanation, and throughout his life he continued to run to his father for guidance. The sickly boy did not go to school. He did not learn to read. All his early education came from the lips of his father and he drank in the words which came from his father's mouth with extraordinary avidity. The father talked much; but never too much for the thirst of his son. Whether the words of the father were uttered at home, in instruction, in prayers, at meals, in evening reading and conversation, or on walks, or from the pulpit, Tommy swallowed them with joy and gazed up to the face of his father with utter adoration. "My incomparable father," was his own description of the Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson.

Mr. Ray Stannard Baker was correct when he stated: "His father was the greatest figure of his youth—perhaps the greatest of his whole life.... The letters between them can be called nothing but love letters." And Professor Daniels was correct in calling Wilson's love for his father his "dominant passion."

When we try to find evidence of a direct expression of Tommy Wilson's hostility to his father, we discover that in all the sixty-eight years of his life we can find no hostile thought or act directed against his father. He continued to ask and to follow his father's advice so long as his father lived; and to the end of his own life, he continued to speak of his father with love and admiration. Only in his choice of a profession did he refuse to submit to the will of his father. His father wished him to become a Minister. He insisted on becoming a statesman. We shall later discuss this decision and, for the moment, ask the reader to suspend judgment upon it, with the hint that even this resolution may prove to have been an expression not of hostility to the father but of admiration for the "incomparable father" of his childhood. What, then, became of Tommy Wilson's aggressive activity toward his father?

WE HAVE POINTED OUT that the ego employs three methods of reconciling conflicting desires: repression, identification, and sublimation; and that the type of reconciliation finally made by the ego depends upon the strength of the original inborn masculinity and femininity, and the accidents of childhood.

Tommy Wilson in his childhood was subjected to an overpowering father; a strong, handsome father who lectured him incessantly, kissed him, hugged him, preached to him and dominated him as the representative of God on earth. If the masculinity of little Tommy had been more powerful than his femininity, he would have found the weight of that father intolerable; he would have hated that father, as so many Ministers' sons have hated their fathers. But, in fact, Tommy Wilson's femininity was far stronger than his masculinity, at least at that period of his life. The portion of his libido which charged passivity to his father was far greater than the portion which charged aggressive activity; and it is obvious that his ego employed the method of repression to handle the conflict between his powerful passivity and his relatively feeble aggressive activity. His aggressive activity toward his father was repressed. A portion of it found storage, to be sure, in his super-ego but none of it ever found discharge through direct hostility to his father.

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We have pointed out that repression is the least effective of all the methods of reconciliation employed by the ego because the repressed desire continues to seek discharge and is immune from criticism by the reason, since it is cut off from consciousness, and that, in consequence of the insulation of the desire and its withdrawal from the moderating influence of reason, it accumulates a large quantity of libido. We find that the portion of Tommy Wilson's hostility to his father which was repressed was so completely repressed that it never once discharged itself against his father; but it continued to seek discharge and many times during his life broke out against father substitutes, driving him to violent and unreasonable hatreds of men who were to him father representatives (like Dean West of Princeton). At all times, because of this repressed hostility, he found it difficult to maintain friendly relations with men of superior intellect or position, and preferred to surround himself with women or inferiors.

The portion of his aggressive activity towards his father which found outlet through a father identification built up in him a tremendously powerful and exalted super-ego. We have noted how normally a little boy substitutes for his desire to kill his father another method of overcoming his father, the method of father identification, and how this produces the super-ego. Tommy Wilson identified himself with his father to an extraordinary degree. He thought the thoughts of his father, spoke the words of his father, adopted his father completely as his model, caring for words as his father had cared for them, despising facts as his father despised them, carrying his imitation to the length of delivering speeches from his father's pulpit to an imaginary congregation, dressing himself so that as a young man he was frequently mistaken for a Minister, and marrying like his father a woman born and reared in a Presbyterian manse.

He never grew beyond this father identification. His qualities and defects remained the qualities and defects of his father. He could not imagine any more perfect man than his father. His father had found his supreme expression in sermons from a pulpit. Tommy Wilson found his supreme expression in sermons from a pulpit which was the White House. His father was not in the habit of devising practical methods to compel the translation of the principles he expounded from the pulpit into reality. Wilson did not devise practical methods to compel the translation of his Fourteen Points into reality. His father sang; so did Tommy. His father read in the evenings to his family; so did Tommy. What his father had done was worth doing. What his father had not done was not worth doing. His father smoked incessantly. Tommy never smoked. "My father did enough of it in his lifetime to answer for both of us," he explained. So that even in this case, in which for once he failed to imitate his father, he did not fail to express most clearly his feeling that he and his father were one: completely identified. He lived again his father's life on a grander scale.

The picture in his unconscious of his "incomparable father," developed from his earliest exaggerations of his father's qualities, which became his super-ego, had an immense effect on the course of his life. His career has, indeed, exceptional interest as an illustration of the power of an exalted super-ego to drive a man of deficient physique to the attainment of great position and power.

We have described how a large number of little boys, with much less provocation than Tommy Wilson, in the unconscious so exaggerate the powers and virtues of the father that they identify him with the Almighty, All Virtuous Father Himself, God; and by identification install this Almighty Father as the super-ego. This unquestionably happened in the case of little Tommy Wilson. It would, indeed, have been remarkable if it had not happened. The little boy looking up to the father in the pulpit whom he considered the most beautiful man on earth and listening to the words of God coming from his mouth could scarcely have avoided identifying his father with the Almighty. The God whom Thomas Woodrow Wilson worshipped to the end of his days was the Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson, the "incomparable father" of his childhood. Until he was ten years old, he was the only beloved son of that God. His identification of himself with the Saviour of Mankind, which became so important and obvious a feature of his character in the latter years of his life, seems to have commenced as an inevitable conclusion in his unconscious during his first years: if his father was God, he himself was God's Only Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

We shall see effects of these identifications appearing throughout his life and we do not

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wish to anticipate later developments; but it seems desirable to record here two invariable results of the possession of a super-ego made in the image of the Almighty. As we have already pointed out, such a super-ego can never be satisfied. No matter what its unfortunate possessor may achieve, he will always feel that he has not done enough. He will take no joy in work accomplished but will always be dissatisfied with himself and driven by a feeling that he has not accomplished what he expects of himself. He can never accomplish what he expects of himself because his super-ego demands that he accomplish the impossible. Throughout Wilson's life this was one of his characteristics. When he had achieved something he took only a momentary joy in the achievement. Almost at once he was harassed by the feeling that he must accomplish more.

A second result of the establishment of God as the super-ego is that the child feels that he has God within him. In his unconscious he himself is God. Whatever he does is right because God does it. Tommy Wilson was able to justify to himself many curious actions of his own because of this unconscious conviction. Whatever he did must be right because God did it. He could on occasion admit that he had been mistaken. He could never admit that he had done wrong. His super-ego would not permit that. Rather than admit that he had done wrong he preferred to forget or distort facts, to turn away altogether from the world of reality and to construct imaginary facts to suit.

It is not remarkable that the possession of such a super-ego as this drives some men to greatness and others to neurosis and psychosis. Its demands are insatiable; but if they are not in large measure satisfied the super-ego tortures its unfortunate possessor. Therefore, he first attempts to satisfy it by actual accomplishment, and often accomplishes great things; but, if his accomplishment is not in fact nearly sufficient to satisfy his super-ego, it scourges him anew. He cannot accomplish in reality more than he has accomplished. To escape the scourges, he therefore invents imaginary accomplishments. He distorts the world of fact. He may become a psychotic. If his hold on reality is stronger, he merely suffers the scourgings of his super-ego and becomes a neurotic. Thus the man who installs God as his super-ego walks on a thin ridge up the mountain of greatness balancing precariously between the abyss of neurosis on one side and the abyss of psychosis on the other. He is lucky if before the end of his life he does not fall into one abyss or the other. We shall see how the super-ego of little Tommy Wilson drove him up this narrow ridge, how he slipped many times towards neurosis, how finally towards the end of his career he nearly plunged into psychosis.

Father and Son

BEFORE WE CONSIDER Wilson as a youth and man we must complete our examination of his desires when he was a child, and we have not yet considered his passivity to his father. We trust that during our discussion of this element in Wilson's nature the reader will remember that his own character, and the character of every other man, is as firmly rooted in bisexuality as was Wilson's character.

Nearly all men have learned to contemplate the physical elements in the human body without shame. To call attention to the presence of oxygen and hydrogen in the body of a man no longer causes excitement; but not all men have yet learned to look calmly at the psychic elements of human nature. To mention the bisexual nature of man still seems somewhat scandalous to the ill-educated. Yet bisexuality is a fact of human nature which, in itself, should arouse no more emotion than the fact that fifty-nine per cent of the body consists of water. If human beings were not bisexual, they would not be human beings. To be born bisexual is as normal as to be born with two eyes. A male or a female without the element of bisexuality would be as inhuman as a Cyclops. Just as an artist may employ the same paints to produce either a beautiful picture or an ugly picture, so the ego may combine the original masculinity and femininity of a man to compose either a beautiful character or an ugly character. To judge the final product, whether picture or character, is legitimate. To condemn the elements is absurd. Masculinity may be employed to produce the heroism of Leonidas or the act of a murderer. There is everything to praise and blame in the results the ego produces with the original masculinity and femininity, but there is nothing praiseworthy or blameworthy in the mere existence of these elements. They exist. That is all. When Margaret Fuller, "high priestess of New England transcendentalism," declared, "I accept the universe," Carlyle remarked, "By God, she'd

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better." Like the universe, the bisexuality of mankind has to be accepted.

The outlets employed by Wilson's ego for his passivity to his father were all outlets approved by his super-ego. His chief outlet was through direct submission to the will of his father. He did what his father wanted him to do and did not do what his father did not want him to do. He accepted his father's thoughts without question and his father's leadership with adoration. He submitted every problem of his life to his father. In Ray Stannard Baker's words: "Until after he was forty years old, Woodrow Wilson never made an important decision of any kind without first seeking his father's advice." He depended on his father financially until he was twenty-nine years old. His father wished him to be a good moral Presbyterian. He became one. His father wished him to become a specialist in words and a speaker. He became one.

A PORTION OF Wilson's passivity to his father found outlet through direct submission to his father; but the submission which, in his unconscious, he desired to make was far more profound and specific than the submission he was able to make in life. He therefore sought more ways in which to submit. He found an outlet, fully approved by his super-ego, through submission to the God who represented his father. All his life he enjoyed daily acts of submission to that God: morning prayers, evening prayers, grace before each meal, and Bible-reading each day. Moreover, so great was his need to submit to his God that never in his life could he allow himself to entertain religious doubt. To have doubted would have been to cut off an outlet which he needed. "God is the source of strength to every man and only by prayer can he keep himself close to the Father of his spirit," he said. Twice, at least, he remarked: "I believe in a Divine Providence. If I did not I would go crazy." Inasmuch as he made this remark about himself one need not feel that it is indecent to agree with him. So considerable a portion of his passivity to his father found outlet through his daily submissions to the God who represented his father that he might have found it impossible to discover another adequate and acceptable outlet. If he had not been able to make his daily submissions to God, he might indeed have taken refuge in paranoia and developed a "persecution mania"; he might have become not the occupant of the White House but the inmate of an asylum.

ANOTHER OUTLET for Wilson's passivity to his father was through a mother identification. We do not know enough about Wilson to make any estimate of the relative importance of this. We know only that he had a mother identification. In spite of his conscious wish to be like his father, Wilson resembled his mother not only in physique but in character. He had not only her thin weak body but also her severity, shyness, and aloofness. He often felt like his mother, and he knew it. His remark to Dudley Field Malone is striking: "When I feel badly, sour, and gloomy and everything seems wrong, then I know that my mother's character is uppermost in me. But when life seems gay and fine and splendid, then I know that the part of my father which is in me is in the ascendance." He usually felt "badly, sour, and gloomy."

Were Wilson alive and would he submit to psycho-analysis, we would doubtless find that mother identification played a momentous part in his life. As it is, we must content ourselves with noting that we shall find evidence of mother identification when we consider the later stages of his life. Available evidence permits us to say merely that he, like all other men, had a mother identification and through it a portion of his passivity to his father found outlet.

Another vital tie with regard to which we have almost no evidence is his relationship to his brother Joseph. When Joseph Ruggles Wilson, Jr., was born, Thomas Woodrow Wilson was ten years old. Normally, the elder brother in his unconscious becomes father to the younger brother and also identifies himself with the younger brother, so that in the relationship he plays father to himself: to the elder brother, the younger brother represents himself as a small child.

We know that Thomas Woodrow Wilson at one time taught his little brother as his father had taught him, that he helped his brother in various ways, that he wrote "I love my brother passionately," that he refused, when President, to appoint his brother to a postmastership or to allow his brother to be made Secretary to the Senate.

IN LATER LIFE Thomas Woodrow Wilson always needed to have at least one affectionate relationship with a younger and physically smaller man, preferably blond. In these friend-

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ships Wilson clearly played the part of his own father and his friend represented himself as a boy. The pattern for these relationships probably was established by the emotions aroused in the ten-year-old Tommy Wilson by the birth of the infant Joe. We have noted that, normally, the elder brother identifies himself with the younger brother and plays father to himself and, in addition, that a sense of hostility, distrust, and betrayal may accompany the affectionate emotions. Wilson's intense friendships were characterised by just such manifestations. He loved Hibben and House intensely so long as they preserved the obedient little brother attitude toward him. He finally concluded that each had betrayed him and cast each into the outer darkness as a Judas. We have seen that this paranoid sense of betrayal springs always from passivity to the father, and that it is often connected with the birth of a younger brother. We must, therefore, mention the possibility that the birth of Joe Wilson inaugurated two important characteristics of his brother Thomas Woodrow Wilson. First, Joe's birth may have marked the beginning of his inclination to establish friendships in which he played father to a younger and smaller man who represented himself. Second, it may have established his inclination to protect himself from his passivity by a paranoid mechanism. Briefly, his little brother Joe may have been the original much-loved betrayer who was followed many years later in his unconscious by Hibben and House. The original emotion involved was, of course, Tommy Wilson's passivity to his own father; but it seems to have reached his friends by way of his brother Joe. It is noteworthy that the most unjustified distrust of Wilson's life—his distrust of his White House Secretary, the faithful Tumulty—was directed toward a younger, smaller blond male named Joe. Joe Tumulty, to Wilson's unconscious, may well have represented Joe Wilson. The actions of a human being are often determined by far more absurd identifications than this.

When one considers Wilson's later relations with his brother Joe, Hibben, House, Tumulty and others, one is driven to conclude that the birth of the infant Joe Wilson must have aroused far stronger emotions in the ten-year-old Tommy Wilson than are usual in a child of that age confronted by an infant brother.

LET US for a moment look at the child as a whole. Thomas Woodrow Wilson was a rather pathetic little boy, a child to whom one cannot refuse sympathy. He was weak, sickly, and nervous, retarded in his development; his eyesight was defective; and he suffered constantly from indigestion and headaches. That he should have been nervous is not extraordinary. Nervousness is the visible sign of an inner conflict which the ego has been unable to solve. And, aside from all minor conflicts which may have harassed him, there was plenty of cause for nervousness in the conflict between his super-ego which commanded that he should be all masculinity, God Himself, and his passivity to his father which demanded that he should submit to his father in all ways even to the point of becoming all femininity. Thus his early relationship to his father doomed him to expect of himself all his life more than his body or mind could give. The nervousness and discontent which marked his life were early established. For this reason he compels our pity.

Yet it must also be recognised that he was in many ways favoured by fate. His sisters and cousins had led him to an easy transfer of his libido from his mother to women outside the immediate family so that he was on his way to a normal sexual life. Moreover, his nature was admirably fitted to the civilisation and class into which he was born.

The Lollard tradition of the British nonconformist middle class transferred to America, in which he was brought up, produced an atmosphere in which it was difficult for a man whose masculinity exceeded his femininity to flourish, except economically; but one well suited to women and to men whose femininity exceeded their masculinity. The "Thou shalt not!" of Lollardry is intolerable to a masculine man but congenial to women.

A more masculine boy than Tommy Wilson would have felt hostility to the *mores* of the family and community in which the Minister's son was reared; but he felt no impulse to revolt. His masculinity was feeble. His ego ideal was not hostile to the ideals of his family or his community. The problems of his life arose not from conflicts with his environment but from conflicts with his own nature. He would have had to face those conflicts if he had been brought up in the comparative freedom of European civilisation. The screen of rationalisations which allowed him to live all his life without facing his passivity to his father would have fallen early on the continent of Europe. He was fortunate to have been born in a nation which was

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protected from reality during the 19th century by inherited devotion to the ideals of Wyclif, Calvin, and Wesley.

Love, Christ, and Breakdown

TOMMY WILSON'S first contact with life outside the sheltering circle of father, mother, sister, and cousins came at the age of thirteen when he went to school. At Professor Derry's little day-school he did badly in his studies. The explanation of his teacher is worth noting: "It was not because he was not bright enough but because he was not interested." Here one seems to see foreshadowed his "one track mind." Some light is thrown on this phenomenon by another event of the same year. We see no lack of interest when we turn to the scene in the Minister's hay-loft and behold Tommy Wilson laying down the laws of orderly speech to the Lightfoots.

If, indeed, as Wilson later said, "the Lightfoots held meetings characterised by much nicety of parliamentary procedure," one may be sure that the "nicety of parliamentary procedure" was imposed upon the small boys by the Minister's son in the chair, and that he was able to impose this "nicety" because of his own love of speech. Throughout his life he took intense interest only in subjects which could somehow be connected with speech. Just as, when a boy, he was unable to find sufficient libido to nourish a healthy interest in the subjects of the school curriculum, later, in order to take an adequate interest in subjects unconnected with speech, he had to consider such subjects one at a time, excluding other subjects from his thought though they might demand immediate attention. Thus developed his "one track mind."

He took no interest in mathematics, science, art or music—except in singing himself, a form of speaking. His method of thinking about a subject seems to have been to imagine himself making a speech about it. His literary work was speech-making on paper, and its defects were for the most part defects produced by using the technique of oratory in literary composition. He seems to have thought about political or economic problems only when he was preparing to make a speech about them either on paper or from the rostrum. His memory was undoubtedly of the vaso-motor type. The use of his vocal chords was to him inseparable from thinking.

ADOLESCENCE, WITH ITS MANIFOLD physical alterations, came upon Wilson along with important changes in his environment. When he was fourteen years old, his father gave up his pastorate in Augusta and became a professor in a theological seminary at Columbia, South Carolina. His family followed him to Columbia. Thus, when adolescence overtook Tommy Wilson, his life no longer was confined to the community which surrounded the Manse and the Church in Augusta. He found himself in the burned capital of South Carolina, in which violent political struggles provided drama. And his father, though still a clergyman, was no longer a Minister but a professor.

A pious young man named Francis J. Brooke came to Columbia to study for the Presbyterian ministry. He was a few years older than Tommy Wilson. He held religious meetings in his room and in the one-storey stable which was the chapel of the Theological Seminary. Tommy attended the meetings and began to love Brooke deeply. Under the influence of Brooke he underwent a religious "conversion." At the age of sixteen-and-a-half he, as he confessed, "exhibited evidences of a work of grace begun in his heart," and was admitted to membership in the First Presbyterian Church of Columbia. Thenceforth he felt himself to be in direct communication with God. He felt that God had chosen him for a great work and would use and preserve him till his work was done. He had been doing badly at school; at once he began to do better. He put a portrait of Gladstone on the wall behind his desk, and when the little cousin he had shot out of the tree asked whose portrait was on the wall, he replied: "That is Gladstone, the greatest statesman that ever lived. I intend to be a statesman too."

THIS SEQUENCE of events provides the nexus between the childhood and manhood of Thomas Woodrow Wilson. To find such a nexus is, indeed, no great discovery. Wilson was adolescent and adolescence is the period which connects childhood and manhood. It is also somewhat platitudinous to note that the profound physical changes of adolescence are invariably accompanied by psychic changes no less profound. Every man knows this from his own experience. With the onset of adolescence the need of the libido to find outlet is greatly sharpened. Not only is the demand of the libido for direct expres-

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sion re-enforced by actual somatic pressure; but alterations in the internal secretions also produce a growth in the masculinity of the boy. The quantity of libido accumulated in activity toward his mother and father is thereby increased. His desire to possess his mother, in the form of a mother representative, is intensified; and his hostility to his father revives, no matter how completely it may have been repressed. This intensification of active desires results occasionally in juvenile delinquency; but happily in most cases its results are comic rather than tragic. The boy's increased activity toward his mother makes him fall desperately in love with an older woman or a girl; and his increased activity toward his father produces a desire to disobey and to escape from the authority of his father, and a tendency to replace his father as a love-object by a father representative.

Adolescence, in the normal manner, produced striking changes in the character of Thomas Woodrow Wilson. But, characteristically, these manifestations appear in connection with desires directed toward his father and not with desires directed toward his mother. There is no evidence that he fell in love with any girl or older woman. He had his mother, sisters, and cousins, and they continued to satisfy the small portion of his libido which was directed toward women. As always, he needed to have a mother representative in his life; but apparently he had no great somatic pressure to satisfy and even during his adolescence, as throughout the rest of his life, his relations with women remained polite and dull.

On the other hand, his increased masculinity disturbed considerably his relations to his father. Indeed, adolescence seems to have produced a somewhat exceptional increase in Wilson's masculinity; and he offers an example of the importance of time in considering psychic phenomena.

There are many bits of evidence which indicate that Wilson's identification of himself with Christ first became the accumulator of a great charge of libido at the time of his "conversion." To discuss here the phenomena of conversion would carry us too far afield. Let us merely note that the "rebirth unto righteousness" which marks "conversion" may occur by the convert identifying himself with some member of some holy family. He then feels reborn because in his unconscious he has become that deity.

Wilson at the time of his "conversion" began to believe that he was in direct communication with God, to feel that God had chosen him for a great work and would preserve him till that work was done. Wilson, as President of the United States, stood before the door of the stable in which Brooke had led him through his religious experience and made a curiously overcharged remark: "I feel as though I ought to take off my shoes. This is holy ground."

This remark, taken in conjunction with his beliefs and behaviour at the time of his conversion, makes it difficult to avoid the conclusion that his identification with Christ first began to carry an important charge of libido at that moment in his adolescence. In his unconscious Wilson probably felt that the stable was holy ground because it was the scene of his rebirth as Christ. The setting was appropriate for such an event. Christ also was born in a stable. His conflicting desires demanded such an event. The identification made in his early childhood was ready for use. Brooke did the rest. Throughout the remainder of his life he employed this identification. As he grew older, more and more of his libido found lodgment in it and outlet through it, until toward the end of his life it became absolutely necessary for him to be able to identify himself with the Son of God. Such facts as had to be suppressed or distorted by his conscious mind in order to preserve this outlet for his libido were distorted or suppressed. At all costs he preserved it, even at the cost of declaring the Treaty of Versailles to be ninety-nine per cent insurance against war and of inventing betrayals by his friends.

Parenthetically, we may here point out that the step between identification with Christ and the paranoid defence against passivity is made easy by the existence of a convenient bridge. Christ had a betrayer, and the betrayer was a disciple, a friend. In later years Wilson, having fully identified himself in his unconscious with Christ, found it easy to cross this bridge. On the other side of reality, he found among his friends many a Judas.

WILSON'S LOVE for Brooke and his identification of himself with Christ were followed not only by happiness but also by notable changes in his character. He began to do better in his studies, and he announced that he intended to become a statesman not a Minister. This announcement, which at first sight appears most puzzling, was the expres-

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sion of a personal wish and was not approved by his family. When he went to Davidson College six months later, his father and mother hoped that he would become a Minister. He himself appears to have been undecided whether to adopt the career which his father had mapped out for him or to attempt to follow in the footsteps of Gladstone. He did not make his irrevocable decision to become a statesman until three and a half years later when he was at Princeton. This decision, which determined not only the course of his life but also in some measure the course of all human life, is so important that it seems worthwhile to attempt to analyse it in detail.

In the autumn of 1873, three months before his seventeenth birthday, Wilson left his father and mother and went with Brooke to Davidson College. Ill-health drove him back to his father and mother in the spring of 1874, and he remained at home being nursed for fifteen unhappy months.

This "breakdown" at Davidson was the first of many similar collapses. Nervousness, dyspepsia and headaches characterised his life from childhood to death. His "breakdowns" were merely periods of greater nervousness, more severe indigestion and more continuous headache than his periods of "health." For example, the period from October 1887 to June 1888 when he was acutely unhappy at Bryn Mawr, is difficult to classify. At least fourteen times in his life his nervousness, dyspepsia and headaches became so severe as to interfere seriously with his work, to say nothing of his happiness.[1]

To discuss these "breakdowns" is not easy. It is, of course, possible, though improbable, that they were organic affections, caused by bodily weakness in which psychic factors had no share or only a small share. In the latter part of Wilson's life severe, undoubtedly physical, diseases accompanied them. From the beginning, therefore, they might possibly have been of purely physical origin. We regret deeply the lack of material which might lead to a conclusive answer to this question.

We know, however, that Wilson was physically weak and also that his neurasthenic symptom complex invariably reappeared as a reaction to difficult situations. We are struck by the fact that he spent three of the ten years between the spring of 1874 and the spring of 1884 being nursed in his father's manse. He was in the full vigour of his young manhood—seventeen at the beginning of that period, twenty-seven at the end—but he clung to the habits of his childhood and remained a virgin full of dyspepsia, nervousness, headaches, and ideals. In default of specific evidence with regard to his physical ailments at that time, we can only conclude that his "nervousness" and "intensity" were caused by the conflict between his femininity and his exalted super-ego which demanded that he should be all masculinity. If we are asked why from time to time his symptoms increased to the point of "breakdown," we can answer only by the generalisation that his symptoms increased in severity whenever the events of his life produced a sharpening of the fundamental conflict.

The Orator and the Statesman

In September 1875, after fifteen months of illness, Wilson went to Princeton desperately determined to overcome his weakness and to make himself the leader his super-ego demanded. To an extraordinary degree he succeeded. His career from 1876 at Princeton to the day when he was received in Paris as the saviour of mankind offers a remarkable example of the power of a strong super-ego to drive to success a man of weak body and neurotic constitution. During his second year at Princeton he entered upon the course which was to lead him to the Presidency of the United States and the leadership of the world. His first year had been passed in attempting to remedy the deficiencies in his intellectual preparation for college and in nursing his stomach. In the autumn of 1876 he read one day an article in an English magazine on "The Orator" in which Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright were described and praised for possessing just such qualities as Thomas Woodrow Wilson was convinced that he possessed. He wrote to his father that he had discovered that he had a mind and decided definitely and unalterably to become a statesman not a Minister.

The reader has perhaps observed that the same person appears in Wilson's original statement of his intention to become a statesman at

[1] *1.* June 1874 to October 1875. *2.* December 1880 to June 1882. *3.* November 1883 to March 1884. *4.* October 1887 to June 1888. *5.* November 1895 to August 1896. *6.* June 1899 to August 1899. *7.* The summer of 1903. *8.* January 1905 to March 1905. *9.* May 1906 to October 1906. *10.* January 1907 to February 1907. *11.* September 1907 to September 1908. *12.* February 1910 to March 1910. *13.* August 1914 to February 1915. *14.* April 1919.

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the age of sixteen and in his final decision at the age of twenty: Gladstone. We must, therefore, suspect that Queen Victoria's Prime Minister may offer the key to the riddle of Wilson's refusal to follow in the footsteps of his father. Let us first consider the state of mind of Tommy Wilson when he pinned the picture of Gladstone on the wall above his desk and announced his intention to become a statesman. He was adolescent. His masculinity had increased. His reawakened aggressive activity toward his father demanded outlet. His passivity to his father was still so powerful that even his re-enforced aggression could not find outlet through direct hostility. The reader will recall that every little boy in his early childhood when confronted by the dilemmas of the Oedipus complex normally escapes from his wish to kill his father by a "cannibalistic" method of destroying his father: he absorbs his father into himself by identification and establishes this idealised father of early childhood as his super-ego.

It seems clear that at the age of sixteen Wilson turned to the same method of expressing his aggressive activity toward his father. He attempted to identify himself with the "incomparable father" of his early childhood. But that "incomparable father" was no longer present before him in life. Every adolescent boy, because of his reawakened aggression, looks at his father with an eye wiped clean of illusions. However much he may strive to maintain his adoration, he is compelled to realise that his father is not the handsomest, strongest, wisest, most virtuous, most powerful man in the world. There are some defects. The old man is even a trifle comic and a little pitiful. The boy may repress this knowledge. Wilson did repress it. He continued to talk of his father as if his father were God-like, to quote him, to admire him. Yet, like every other adolescent, he must have known at the bottom of his mind that his father was in fact not perfect. He needed intensely to refind the incomparable father of his early childhood and to identify himself with that father, and thus by a cannibalistic identification to give expression to his aggression toward his actual father. He refound the incomparable father of his early childhood in Mr. Gladstone.

The Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson, however, had no intention of allowing his son to become anything but a replica of himself. Tommy was sent to Davidson College to be prepared for the ministry. The boy's passivity to his father was still so strong that he did not revolt or refuse. He went to Davidson. But thenceforth in his unconscious the figure of the incomparable father of his childhood bore the face of Gladstone, not the face of the Minister of the Gospel. To feel that he himself was the incomparable father of his childhood Tommy Wilson had to become a statesman.

Marriage

Thomas Woodrow Wilson at the age of twenty-one was a formed character. All the chief outlets for his libido had been established and, except for an intensified identification of himself with God after his defeat by Dean West, he did not greatly change in the remaining forty-seven years of his life. Our study of his character must, therefore, proceed from a slightly altered standpoint.

The problem of finding happiness in life, which preoccupies all men, is in large measure a problem of psychic economics. The individual possesses a certain amount of libido which stores itself in various accumulators and seeks discharge through multiform outlets. If the outlets are approved by the super-ego and are nicely adjusted to the quantity of libido demanding discharge, neither restraining the current which is present nor releasing so much libido that the accumulator is drained dry, the individual is happy. Conversely, if the outlets are disapproved by the super-ego or are insufficiently large or are too large the individual is unhappy. Modern psychology can add nothing to the classic formula for happiness, "moderation in all things," except the footnote that moderation in the demands of the super-ego is as essential as moderation in all other things.

Yet even a man who is ready to live by this antique rule, cannot expect to find happiness easily or to possess long the happiness he finds. To find outlets for the fundamental, often opposed desires is extremely difficult; and if satisfactory outlets are found the changing circumstances of life do not allow them to remain unaltered. Death, illness, loss of affection or status, are inseparable from human life and all involve the loss of outlets for the libido, so that the wisest and most moderate man cannot count on holding his happiness. Less wise men, among whom Thomas Woodrow Wilson must be numbered, are unable to attain more than

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momentary flashes of happiness. Wilson's immoderate super-ego which demanded from him the impossible, was alone enough to condemn him to life-long discontent.

The young man at Princeton did badly as usual in studies which were unconnected with speaking and writing; but in those which had to do with words he did well. He studied Burke, Bright, and Bagehot, practised gestures in front of a mirror, delivered orations to trees in the woods, wrote out visiting cards inscribed *Thomas Woodrow Wilson, Senator from Virginia*, organised a debating club in which Governments rose and fell as in the House of Commons, and wrote an article advocating the establishment of the English form of Cabinet Government in the United States.

At Christmas, 1879, when Wilson was nearly twenty-three years old, he fell in love with a woman for the first time. We have seen that in his childhood he had transferred some of the libido which was directed toward his mother to his sisters and cousins. And characteristically he fell in love with a cousin: Hattie Woodrow. She was the daughter of his mother's brother, Thomas Woodrow, and she was certainly a mother representative to him. Like his mother she came from Chillicothe, Ohio. Her father, like his mother's father, was named Thomas Woodrow. Wilson began to write "somewhat ardent" letters to her. His increased masculinity for the moment led him no closer to the body of a woman.

The major portion of his libido was still directed towards his father. To become Gladstone was still his great desire. Graduated from Princeton in June 1879, he went in the autumn to the University of Virgina to study law, not because he wished to be a lawyer but because he considered law the "sure road" to statesmanship.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA the law bored him but debating as usual fascinated him, and as usual he began to try to reorganise the debating club of which he was a member. To draw up a constitution for a debating club gave him intense satisfaction throughout his life. As a boy of twelve he laid down the rules of orderly speech for the Lightfoots. He made or remade constitutions at Davidson and at Princeton. He announced his intention to do so at the University of Virginia. He did so at Johns Hopkins and at Wesleyan. He examined the constitution of New Jersey for the purpose of remaking it. He prepared a constitution for the League of Nations. From the Lightfoots to the League of Nations is a clear line. We have seen that in laying down the laws of orderly assembly for the Lightfoots Wilson was both obeying his father and imitating his father; he was finding outlet for both his passivity, and, through identification, for activity toward his father. He found satisfaction for the same desires in preparing the Covenant of the League of Nations. Wilson's share in founding the League of Nations has been exaggerated; but in so far as he was its "father," the League of Nations was the grandchild of the Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson, the Professor Extraordinary of Rhetoric, whose interest in words and the rules of speech so bored his acquaintances, and so impressed his son.

At the University of Virginia Wilson was elected President of the Jefferson Society, in spite of his dislike of Jefferson. This hostility to Jefferson, and a similar hostility to Disraeli, at first sight seems somewhat extraordinary in a young man who aspired to become a statesman. Jefferson was one of the most distinguished of American statesmen and Disraeli was not the least distinguished of British. The explanation of Wilson's hostility is, however, not far to seek. He saw himself as a "Christian statesman": Gladstone. Neither Jefferson nor Disraeli was a Christian statesman. Jefferson was a Deist, Disraeli a Jew. Disraeli, indeed, was the personal opponent of his master, Gladstone. They were appropriate devils for the Father-God with whom he had identified himself. When Wilson later became a statesman and a deity in his own unconscious, he was always somewhat inclined to clothe his opponents in the habiliments of Satan.

In December 1880, when he was twenty-four, Wilson's habitual indigestion and headaches became so severe that he had to leave the University of Virginia without a degree, and return to his father's manse to be nursed. There is no evidence that he had ceased to be a virgin. He was still writing letters to his cousin Hattie. He was acutely unhappy. Six months later he visited the family of Hattie Woodrow in Chillicothe, Ohio, where his father had married his mother thirty-two years before, and he proposed marriage to his cousin. She refused him. He returned to his father's manse and for the first time began to call himself Woodrow Wilson, dropping Thomas.

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In later years Wilson gave various explanations of this action; but no one of his explanations is convincing. And when a man gives various unconvincing explanations of an act one must suspect that the real reason for the act lies in his unconscious. The unconscious reason for Wilson's dropping his name Thomas is, in fact, clear. The reader will recall that the ego normally replaces a lost love-object by identification of the self with the lost object. The little boy who loses a kitten may crawl about mewing. The little boy who has to give up his mother as a love-object at the time of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex identifies himself with his mother. Wilson employed this familiar mechanism. He went to Chillicothe to win a Woodrow cousin who represented his mother. Her father, like his mother's father, was Thomas Woodrow. In his unconscious he was unquestionably his own father going to Chillicothe to marry his mother. He was rejected. He was acutely unhappy. He had lost a mother representative whose name like his mother's name was Woodrow. Like the child who mews, he replaced the lost mother representative by himself. He dropped Thomas—the name of the father of the girl who had rejected him—and became unadulterated Woodrow.

After eighteen months at home he went to Atlanta to begin the legal labours which he felt confident would lead him to statesmanship. But in Atlanta he did not find even one client. He began to despair. The road to statesmanship seemed closed to him. In the spring of 1883 at the age of twenty-six, he sat in his office in Atlanta an utterly unhappy man.

At this critical moment in his development, the stroke of good fortune without which it is almost impossible for any man to achieve distinction befell him. He went to visit the beloved little cousin he had shot out of the tree. The cousin was married; but there he met Ellen Axson, and she became to him the mother representative he needed in his life. That he should have fallen in love with her at once is not remarkable. She was cast in the same mould as his mother, sisters, and cousins. Like his mother and sisters she was daughter of a Minister of the Presbyterian Church. Like his mother she was not only daughter of the Minister but mistress of the manse as well. Her mother was dead and she was acting as mother to the Minister's three small children. Her position in life was almost precisely the position of his own mother when his father had married her. In asking Ellen Axson to marry him, Wilson was again identifying himself with his father. There are a thousand indications in their later relations that Ellen Axson was not only a mother representative to Wilson but a close, full, and complete mother representative.

To fall in love with a mother representative is to give hostages to fortune. Such a relationship takes so completely the flow of the libido directed towards women that it becomes either a source of the greatest happiness and strength to a man or a source of the greatest unhappiness and weakness. If Ellen Axson had not loved Woodrow Wilson, or if having once loved him she had ceased to love him, he would have received a shattering blow from which, given his neurotic constitution and his habitual neurasthenic symptoms, he might never have recovered. But the contrary happened. She not only loved him deeply but continued to love him so long as she lived. From the day in the autumn 1883 when she promised to marry him to the summer day in 1914 when she died, Woodrow Wilson possessed the greatest source of strength which may exist in the life of any man: the undivided love of a complete mother representative. It is difficult to exaggerate the help she gave him. His relations to men continued to be unsettled throughout his life, producing conflicts which exhausted him. His relations to women were settled. He could always creep back to the sheltering arms of a perfect mother representative for rest. "I am the only one who can rest him," she said. That was true. He called her "the centre of quiet" for his life. Without that centre of quiet Wilson would early have succumbed to the conflicts in his nature. His career was as much the product of Ellen Axson's love as of his own super-ego. She was for him a magnificent wife.

His letter of 24 February 1885 to Ellen Axson contains a remarkable bit of self-revelation:

> Yes . . . there is, and has long been, in my mind a "lurking sense of disappointment and *loss*, as if I had missed from my life something upon which both my gifts and inclinations gave me claim"; I do feel a very real regret that I have been shut out from my heart's *first*-primary-ambition and purpose, which was, to take an active if possible a leading part of public life, and strike out for myself, if I had the ability, a *statesman's* career. That is my heart's—or, rather, my *mind's*—deepest secret.

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Wilson's framing of the word primary in this sentence makes one feel that, when he wrote primary, his unconscious was thinking: Prime Minister: Gladstone.

As a student at Johns Hopkins, he wrote *Congressional Government*. He produced the impression in this book that he knew Congress intimately from personal contact. But he never once went to look at the Congress he was describing, although Washington was about an hour by train from Baltimore where he was writing. This shrinking from contact with men and facts persisted throughout his life.

When *Congressional Government* was accepted by the publishers he was in ecstasy. But within a week he described himself as "down with the blues." Throughout his life his satisfaction in accomplishment invariably was overcome almost at once by a feeling that he had not done enough. His super-ego was insatiable. When the book was published he dedicated it not to his fiancée but to his father; and he asked his father to decide whether or not he should return to Johns Hopkins for a second year and take a degree, thus inviting his father to decide whether his marriage should be accelerated or postponed. He was twenty-eight years of age at the time and fond of writing letters describing himself as having "strong passions" and feeling as if he were "carrying a volcano" about with him; but this double subordination of his fiancée to his father shows clearly how weak was the flow of his libido directed toward women.

In June 1885 Woodrow Wilson married Ellen Axson. Until her death in August 1914, he had not the slightest sexual interest in any other woman. To be sure he wrote hundreds of long sympathy-seeking letters to Mrs. Hulbert and other ladies. These letters seem attempts to recreate his relationship to his older sisters rather than his relationship to his mother. It was on Ellen Axson's breast, not on the breast of one of his correspondents, that he found rest.

Woodrow Wilson took his newly-married bride to a college for girls, at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, and commenced his work as an instructor in history. Almost at once he became acutely unhappy. In spite of his young love, at a time when most men find themselves on the heights of happiness, he found himself in an abyss of misery. His nervous wretchedness at Bryn Mawr was so acute and extraordinary that it cannot have sprung solely from his super-ego.

His chief lament was that he did not want to teach girls: he wanted to teach boys. Here we find ourselves once again contemplating the relations of little Tommy Wilson to his father. Neither his activity nor his passivity to his father was finding satisfactory outlet. To teach boys offered an outlet for both desires. In lecturing to boys he could identify himself with the boy as well. Thus he could play son to himself and father to himself and re-establish the infantile relationship which had made him so happy. But unless the student to whom he lectured was a male the identification became not only impossible but worse than impossible; he became his father lecturing to a girl who represented himself; he felt himself again a woman and that had become intolerable to him. Before he had been at Bryn Mawr six months he was searching for avenues of escape.

To teach at Princeton became his hope. He went to New York to speak at a Princeton Alumni banquet hoping to impress his auditors sufficiently to obtain an instructorship at the college. The audience laughed at him, jeered, walked out. The wound to his narcissism must have been immense and it is not remarkable that thereafter he had little love for anything connected with New York.

He recoiled to his cherished identification with Gladstone. He went to Washington and tried to get a position in the Department of State. He failed.

His wife was pregnant. He wanted a son, as he wanted men pupils, through whom to find again the stream of libido running toward his own father. His wife gave birth to a girl. Once again the stream of libido running toward his father was dammed. He grew more and more nervous. His wife again became pregnant. Again a child was born and again the child was a girl. His nervousness increased. He wrote to his friend Robert Bridges: "I almost fear I shall break down in health here if I stay another year." Again he tried the outlet of statesmanship, attempting to secure an appointment as Assistant Secretary of State. He failed. He approached breakdown, described himself as "hungry for a class of *men*," and called that winter, 1887–1888, "a terrible winter."

The reader contemplating all this nervous unhappiness in the life of a young married man

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who had a charming home and the esteem of Bryn Mawr may perhaps be tempted to conclude that his relations with his wife did not give him satisfaction. That is certainly not true. As always Ellen Axson was taking care admirably of the minor portion of his libido which was directed toward women. And he found pleasure in his daughters. But the mainstream of his libido had been turned back again and again from outlets it had striven to open. His relations to men were so much more important to him than his relations to women that no amount of domestic felicity could make him happy.

His reaction to the death of his mother at the end of the "terrible winter" throws some light on this disproportion in his nature.

> My mother was a mother to me in the fullest, sweetest sense of the word, and her loss has left me with a sad, oppressive sense of having somehow suddenly *lost my youth*. I feel old and responsibility-ridden. . . . And yet the worst of it is not my own bereavement, but my father's, whose daughters are both married, and who, with my college-boy brother, is left practically without a home. My own happy little home seems to reprove me on his account in my morbid moments. . . .

He invited his father to come and live with him.

This letter is no cry of pain for a lost love-object. His words about his mother are polite and conventional. Ellen Axson had taken her place. But his passivity to his father was stirred deeply by the thought that his father needed a wife. In his unconscious he had always wished to take the place of his mother with his father. Promptly in his unconscious he took it. He was filled with a feeling not that he had lost his mother but that he had lost his youth. The death of his mother removed the one obstacle to becoming in his unconscious the wife of his father. He felt "old and responsibility-ridden," felt that he must make a home for his father. One is tempted to say, that in his unconscious he felt himself an old woman: his mother. It is not surprising that he invited his father to come to live with him or that, in so far as possible, he played the part of devoted wife to his father till the Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson died.

On 9 March 1890, he wrote to his wife, ". . . a distinct *feeling* of maturity—or rather of maturing—has come over me. The *boyish* feeling that I have so long had and cherished is giving place consciously to another feeling. . . ." and added that he was "at last, perhaps, becoming a self-confident (mayhap a self-assertive) man." Consciously he thought that he was becoming at last a grown man, but it seems likely that in his unconscious he had become a grown woman. Thus even the death of his mother was made to serve his unsatisfied desire to be loved as a wife by his father. He did not in his unconscious become a grown man until after the death of his father.

"Hungry for a class of men" through whom he could loose his activity and passivity to his father, he leaped at a chance to leave Bryn Mawr for Wesleyan. There he had his class of men, and his health and spirits improved at once. The seven years which followed were in fact the happiest and healthiest of his life. He had no "breakdown" during the entire period and his habitual symptoms did not greatly harass him. His lectures, in which he played father to himself, pouring over his male auditors a loving warmth and rolling out magnificent generalities in the manner of the pulpit preacher, were most successful. Yet only the outlet of statesmanship could fully satisfy and he was delighted when, after two years at Wesleyan, he obtained a position at Princeton which offered a field of labour closer to the current of national life.

Even during this period of comparative happiness, whenever Woodrow Wilson was separated from his father he wrote longing love letters to the old Presbyterian Minister. His letter of 16 December 1888, for example, is a notable outpouring on the part of a man of thirty-two:

> *My precious father,*
>
> My thoughts are full of you and dear "Dode" all the time. Tennessee seems *so* far away for a chap as hungry as I am for a sight of the two men whom I love. As the Christmas recess approaches I realise as I have so often before, the *pain* there is in a season of holiday and rejoicing away from you. As you know, one of the chief things about which I feel most warranted in rejoicing is that I am your son.
>
> I realise the benefit of being your son more and more as my talents and experience grow: I recognise the strength growing in me as of the nature of your strength: I become more and more conscious of the hereditary wealth I possess, the capital of principle, of literary force and skill, of capacity for first-hand thought; and I feel daily more and more bent toward creating in my own children that combined respect and tender devotion for their father that you gave your children for you. Oh, how happy I should be, if I could make them think of me as I think of you! You have given me a love that grows, that is stronger in me now that I am a man than it was when I was a boy, and which

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will be stronger in me when I am an old man than it is now—a love, in brief, that is rooted and grounded in reason, and not in filial instinct merely—a love resting upon abiding foundations of *service*, recognising you as in a certain very real sense the author of all I have to be grateful for. I bless God for my noble, strong, and saintly mother and for my incomparable father. Ask "Dode" if he does not subscribe? And tell him that I love my brother passionately.... Ellie joins me in unbounded love to you both.

Your devoted son,
WOODROW

No less remarkable as an exhibit of mother identification is the following passage from his letter of 20 March 1890:

...I find that everybody regards my election to P. as a sort of crowning success; congratulations pour in from all sides; evidently I am "writ down" in the category of "successful men." I suppose I ought to feel an immense accession of personal satisfaction, of pride; but somehow I can't manage it. I feel grateful and full of courage at the prospect of having an opportunity to do just the studying and writing I want to do under the most favourable circumstances; but so far as personal gratification is concerned, I would infinitely rather know that I was going to have a chance to be cured of the heart-sickness from which I suffer because of my separation from you and "Dode." My *mind* can't give me gratification: I know it too well —and know it a poor thing; I have to rely on my *heart* as the sole source of contentment and happiness, and that craves, oh *so* fiercely, the companionship of those I love. It seems to me that the older I get the more I need you; for the older I get the more I appreciate the debt I owe you, and the more I long to increase it. It seems to me that my separation from you, instead of becoming a thing of wont, becomes more and more unendurable. Are you *quite* well, now? Please, sir, let me know as early as possible your plans for the summer—how soon they include us. I suppose dear "Dode" will come North too this summer. I keep his picture on my desk all the time, and all the time long to see him.—Dear Ellie is much better though her foot is still far from being well. She pretends to love you and "Dode" as much as I do: but that is impossible.

Your devoted son,
WOODROW

Symptoms

THE EXTRAORDINARY preoccupation with literary "style" which marked Wilson's first happy years at Princeton seems to have arisen from the unsatisfied portions of both his activity and passivity to his father. In the words of his brother-in-law: "...he was so preoccupied with literary 'style,' that it approached obsession." His father also had been preoccupied to an exceptional degree by "style," and Wilson's "obsession" probably drew its chief charge of libido from his need for an additional identification with the Professor Extraordinary of Rhetoric. But since the Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson had done his best to compel his son to become preoccupied with literary "style," this preoccupation also gave outlet to Wilson's passivity to his father. Thus, like speech-making, literary "style" offered outlet to Wilson's most powerful desires.

The features of his "style" leave no doubt as to its parentage. It was the "style" of a boy immensely impressed by the phrases of a pedantic preacher. Archaic affectations, symbolism, alliteration, flight from fact to generalisation, the piling of adjective on adjective, the use of superlatives and words with vague connotations like "counsel" and "process" characterised it. He was himself aware that his style was marked by pedantry but he found himself helpless to alter it. This is not surprising, since it was not essentially a vehicle to convey thought but a means to give expression to his unconscious desires.

The unconscious is apt to push identifications to somewhat ridiculous extremes, and it is not without interest to note that Woodrow Wilson went too far in his pomposity for even the Professor Extraordinary of Rhetoric. After reading his son's biography of George Washington in which more than a hundred sentences began with *'Tis, 'Twas,* or *'Twould,* the Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson was driven to remark, "Woodrow, I'm glad you let George do his own dying in your book."

When Woodrow Wilson wrote or spoke he was, in his unconscious, his father preparing or delivering a sermon, and he attempted to make his alliterations sing as sweetly and his generalities flash as brightly as those of the preacher had sung and flashed in the mind of the child who sat in the fourth pew and adored his "incomparable" father. That his generalisations might have little to do with fact did not trouble him. They existed for themselves, as outlets for identification with his father. Facts are the enemies of generalisations, and the dislike of facts which he so often expressed was doubtless due in part to their ability to make generalisations difficult. They interfered with the easy flow of his libido through this father identification; they also threatened his belief in and submission to his Father-God. Thus facts

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stood in the way of the discharge of his libido from its two greatest accumulators, activity and passivity to his father. It is not remarkable that he developed the habit of forgetting them when he found it inconvenient to remember them.

The quality of his work was not thereby improved. His magnum opus, *A History of the American People,* was so inaccurate that, when he became President of the United States and republication of it promised to be profitable, a competent historian had to be summoned to revise it. He ignored the unpleasant fact of the existence of the secret treaties of the Allies. His fight for a "just and lasting peace" was thereby foredoomed to failure. He forgot the location of the Brenner Pass and thus delivered two hundred and fifty thousand German-Austrians to Italy. Towards the end of his life he became able to forget any fact which conflicted with the flow of his libido through outlets for activity and passivity to his father; and a considerable portion of the human race had to suffer for the overwhelming love which the Reverend Joseph Ruggles Wilson had inspired in his son.

In the autumn of 1895, while Wilson was writing his *George Washington,* his habitual symptoms suddenly became severe. He lay on his back with violent indigestion and great nervousness. He struggled through the winter nursing his aching head and sick stomach, complaining, "I am so tired of a merely talking profession. I want to *do* something." In the spring of 1896 he broke down completely. Neuritis, which deprived him of the use of his right hand, was added to his usual symptoms.

Flutter

IN THIS PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY of Wilson we have devoted little attention to the conscious portion of his mind and we have no apology to offer for our concentration on his deeper mental mechanisms. The more important portion of the mind, like the more important portion of an iceberg, lies below the surface. The unconscious of a neurotic employs the conscious portion of the mind as a tool to achieve its wishes. The convictions of a neurotic are excuses invented by reason to justify desires of the libido. The principles of a neurotic are costumes employed to embellish and conceal the nakedness of the unconscious desires.

The civilisation in which a child is educated nevertheless influences his character. It determines at least the style of the clothing in which his desires must be dressed in order to appear respectable. The child breathes in from the atmosphere of his home and his community ideas as to the gentleman-as-he-should-be, and these ideas become a part of his ego ideal and determine the form of his convictions. This gentleman-as-he-should-be is not a stable character. His aspect changes continually in time and space. The God of one age becomes the devil of the next. The Christian devil wears the horns of Pan and his cloven hoof.

Although styles in civilisation are unstable, like styles in women's clothing, the child does not know this and accepts the principles of his family and community as if they were immutable laws of nature and forms his idea of the gentleman-as-he-should-be in accordance with them. Thereby the style of the convictions in which he later dresses his desires is determined.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson, as a child, inhaled the ideas and ideals of the middle-class Bible-reading Britishers who had spread an Old Testament view of life over America. Inevitably Wilson clothed the desires of his libido in the approved habiliments of the British nonconformist middle class.

In all his recorded words there is no sign that he understood French, German, or Italian civilisation, to say nothing of the classic Greek. His convictions were British middle-class convictions. To him the finest flowers of the human spirit were the products of Lollardry and Presbyterianism. His hostility to other views of life was profound. One American at least could have been understood and esteemed by the ancient Greeks: the free-living, free-thinking, many-sided Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, founder of the University of Virginia, architect, philosopher, President of the United States. Woodrow Wilson excluded Jefferson entirely from a *Calendar of Great Americans* which he drew up in 1894, on the ground that "Jefferson was not a thorough American because of the strain of French philosophy in his thought." He felt that a "thorough American" must have the ideas and ideals of the British middle class.

This somewhat excessive admiration for the British middle class sprang, of course, from his reverence for his own progenitors. They were all members of that class. His mother and the parents of his father were immigrants from the British Isles. By every unconscious identification he must have felt himself to be a middle-class Britisher, and his abundant narcissism

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made him admire those whose marriages had resulted in the procreation of himself. An early established admiration of this sort is often later corrected by an increased acquaintance with the world; but Woodrow Wilson was cut off from direct contact with European life by his ignorance of European languages. All his heroes were British: Burke, Bright, Bagehot, Gladstone. He found France, Italy, and Germany so distasteful when he ventured on to the continent for the first time in 1903, that he fled home after a few unhappy weeks. He did not return to the continent until 1919, when he arrived to rearrange Europe. His conscious mind remained all his life the mind of a North British Presbyterian Minister.

FOUR TIMES AFTER "breakdowns" he attempted to overcome his habitual symptoms by visits to the British Isles. His experience in Ireland was confined to a few days of contempt; but Scotland he loved; the English Universities moved him to ecstasy; and the English Lake District became the home of his heart. He decided that he would spend his old age not in America but at Rydal in the English Lake District which he described in terms that recall the feeling of a little boy for his mother:

> You know how broad and gracious the slopes of dear Wansfell are,—like some great nourishing breast, it always seemed to me... Ulpha Fell ...has infinitely wide and rich expanses of green slope, sweeping up from the wooded spaces of the valley, about the stream in curves of exquisite beauty.

To break down, to rest until he had subdued his symptoms, then to return to work with a ruthless determination to assert his masculinity became a formula for his life. Thenceforth each of his breakdowns was followed by an exhibition of increased aggression. He returned to work determined to satisfy it through the long-established outlet of identification with Gladstone.

An opportunity to advance towards executive leadership came quickly. He was asked to deliver an address on the occasion of the Princeton Sesqui-Centennial Celebration on 21 October 1896. He chose as his subject, "Princeton in the Nation's Service," remarking in the course of his speech:

> There is laid upon us the compulsion of the national life. . . . There is nothing that gives such pitch to public service as religion.... I have had sight of the perfect place of learning in my thought... every eye within it bright in the clear day and quick to look toward heaven for the confirmation of its hope. Who shall show us the way to this place?

He asked the final question of this address with the obvious hope that his auditors would answer, silently at least, Woodrow Wilson. Many of his hearers were thoroughly dissatisfied with the Reverend Francis L. Patton, President of the University. No one in the audience was more dissatisfied than was Woodrow Wilson. He despised Patton; but he was careful to conceal his contempt from Patton himself and from Patton's friends. He wanted to become President of Princeton. Therefore he kept a foot in the camp of Patton, and a foot in the camp of Dean West, concealing his antagonism and angling deftly for the support of both.

On 9 June 1902, at the age of forty-five, Wilson was elected President of Princeton. He was in ecstasy. "I feel like a new prime minister ready to address his constituents," he wrote to his wife. He was Gladstone at last! At last the flow of his libido through the conduit of activity toward his father could find outlet by way of the identification he had established twenty-five years before.

Often during the years of his Princeton presidency Wilson repeated the thought contained in his statement that he felt "like a new prime minister." He remarked, for instance, to the members of an association of Princeton clubs, "I always feel, upon an occasion like this, that I am a responsible minister reporting to his constituents." And he was in the habit of calling education "minor statesmanship." When he was elected President of Princeton he became, in his unconscious, Gladstone.

The opening of this long-desired outlet for his aggressive activity toward his father, plus the satisfaction his election to the presidency of Princeton gave to his super-ego and to his narcissism, relieved his discontent at once. He wrote to his wife: "I find... that my election to the presidency has done a very helpful thing for me. It has settled the future for me and given me a sense of *position* and of definite, tangible tasks which takes the *flutter* and restlessness from my spirits." The word "flutter" is so feminine in its connotations that one should hesitate to employ it to describe a man; but since Wilson used it to describe himself and underlined it, we may note that it was admirably descriptive. He spent most of his life in a flutter.

(*A concluding instalment will be published next month*)

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Henry Fairlie

The Life of Politics

Politicians, Statesmen, and Leaders

POLITICS clearly involves leadership of a sort—a man leads his government, he leads his party, he may even lead his country—but those who call for leadership with a sense of purpose usually intend a great deal more. They may not ask of a British Prime Minister what Clinton Rossiter asks of an American President: that he should be "the one-man distillation of the American people . . . the Voice of the People. . . . While he acts as political leader of some, he serves as moral spokesman of all."[1] But they ask—astonishingly, in a country with a two-party system, in a political system which lives by conflict—that he should be more than a temporary party leader with the support, at the most, of only half the country.

At its most transparent, the call for leadership is usually a thinly disguised call for coalition or "national" government. At its most vulgar, it is a call simply for glamour, for moral excitement, a wish to avoid the complexities of real events and issues by quite false over-simplifications. At its most dangerous, it is a call for a unified will, embodied in a single man, expressed by a single voice. Whatever form it takes, it is a call to get away from the untidiness, the compromises and the shifts, the manoeuvres and the balances, of free government. It is also a call to the nation to live permanently in an atmosphere of crisis and moral rearmament, always requiring rescuing and redemption, and always seeking them from a politician who, for the purpose, is endowed with quite improbable virtues.

Political leadership, in a free country, cannot offer these consolations; but people will continue to look for them. They ask for exaltation from men who are not intended, as they are not equipped, to supply it. "If people want a sense of purpose," Harold Macmillan once said, "they should get it from their archbishops. They should certainly not get it from their politicians."[2] It was the voice of a political tradition, part of whose value, and strength, is that it instructs us in the limits of political action.

The opportunities and methods of political leadership will be understood best by examining how political leaders reach "the top of the greasy pole"; what chances and temptations await them there; how they dispose of them. Only then can we hope to grasp what kind of leadership they are in a position to offer, and we are entitled to expect from them.

Top of the Greasy Pole

OUR PRIME MINISTERS of the twentieth century have not, on the whole, been men obviously fitted for such exaltation. Arthur Balfour had the intellect, he also had the iron, but he did not have the head of steam; Campbell-Bannerman was a useful warhorse, but there is no evidence that any idea ever entered his head, or that any ever left it; Asquith perfectly filled Bagehot's prescription for a constitutional statesman, the powers of a first-rate united to the creed of a second-rate man; Lloyd George, an original, became too early an adventurer; Bonar Law gave little to his age, but can be excused since he took little from it also; Baldwin, although he had the instincts, lacked

[1] Clinton Rossiter, *The American Presidency* (1957).

[2] In an interview with the author (1963) Macmillan, in fact, went further. People, he said, would not discover a sense of purpose until they had rediscovered a sense of sin. Some, no doubt, would say that he helped them along the road.

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the intelligence; Ramsay MacDonald lost his way; Neville Chamberlain always deserved Lloyd George's quip that he looked at politics through the wrong end of a municipal drain-pipe; Churchill walked, alone, with destiny; Attlee was narrow and insular; Eden, a juvenile lead who should never have been invited to play a dramatic role, had neither vision nor imagination; Macmillan, another original, received power too late; Douglas-Home was a brisk man for a brisk interlude. Wilson has yet to be judged.

Such a summary, deliberately but only slightly unfair, should at least warn us that it is not wise to expect too much of political leadership, especially in a democracy. One of the arguments of those who opposed the Reform Bill of 1832—that the old electoral system enabled patrons, through their rotten boroughs, to introduce into the House of Commons fresh and young political talent—looks, in hindsight, a great deal more convincing than it seemed at the time.

Why these thirteen men, and not thirteen others, should have reached the top of the greasy pole has probably the simplest of explanations: that they happened to be around at the right time. They, of course, were not beyond giving events a push. But would Harold Wilson have become leader of the Labour Party if Hugh Gaitskell had died a year earlier? Would Macmillan have been able to strike if he had not had the opportunity, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to establish his authority in Cabinet and his reputation in the House? Would Gaitskell ever have led his party if Attlee had resigned, as perhaps he should have done, after the defeat of 1951? Would Attlee himself have become Prime Minister if he had not just happened to be there, available, when the Labour Party could not decide between Herbert Morrison and Arthur Greenwood? Candidates for political leadership are a little like street-walkers, keeping their beat, hoping events will pick them up.

Wilson, after all, owed his election as party leader, not only to the death of Hugh Gaitskell, but to the death of Aneurin Bevan. Macmillan might never have received the Queen's commission if Oliver Stanley had not died, or if Colonel Nasser had not catapulted himself into office. Churchill, of course, needed the assistance, not of earthly powers, but of the god Mars.

YET, ALTHOUGH IT IS important to understand how much of political leadership depends on hazard, one should be careful not to carry the point too far. In 1939 and 1940, a young and shrewd Conservative member of Parliament, Vyvyan Adams, published two volumes, under the pseudonym of "Watchman."[3] They were an attempt to summarise the qualities, and predict the future, of both the front-bench and back-bench politicians of the day. His judgments were uncannily correct, and they are a reminder that it is possible to detect the qualities which may take a man to the top.

"Has Mr. Eden," asked "Watchman" in 1939, "that quality which Kipling described as 'essential guts'...? Before long we may see at No. 10 Downing Street a wholly new type—a serious overgrown boy, a friendly well-mannered undergraduate, a man who looks like a soldier and thinks like an artist, one of whom his friends are so fond that, with an almost feminine tenderness, they speak of him as '*Dear* Anthony'." There was not much more to be said about Eden's premiership seventeen years later.

"A faint intellectual arrogance limits the number of his intimates," he observed of Macmillan in 1940. "On the other hand he is quite fearless.... Always his efforts can be seen from the Press Gallery to be commanding attention from one quarter or another.... It would be a sad climax for Harold Macmillan, aged fifty, to earn the epithet of a disused slag-heap." It was a cautious but, for the time, prescient judgment: and it noticed the right points.

"Of Mr. R. A. Butler many would say, 'Here is a young man pre-destined to leadership. Nothing could keep it away from him'. Yet it is not simple to foresee such a climax." So, now, say all of us; and so, in the intervening years, we all from time to time said. But—in 1939?

Although not discarding Herbert Morrison as a future leader of the Labour Party, "Watchman" had, in 1939, his doubts. "Herbert Morrison is London, not England.... Yet this immense metropolitan prestige is a weakness as well as a source of strength.... Today he has sunk back upon the throne of London, a genial despot with his considerable powers circumscribed in scope and time." Twenty years later, his career needed no other epitaph.

[3] *Right Honourable Gentleman* (1939); *What of the Night?* (1940). Adams, in order to throw the reviewers off the scent, included a self-portrait of himself.

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"Arithmetic tells you he has passed into the early forties"—this, in 1939, of Aneurin Bevan —"but he retains the instability which is the mark and prerogative of youth . . . he is always kicking against the pricks and that is fatal in the one army which fears above all that its privates may be out of step or breaking the ranks. . . . A really great personal effort could save him, an effort by which he took hold of himself and his tongue." The effort was, in the end, made. But it was made—and there was tragedy here—too late.

But perhaps "Watchman's" most dazzling foresight was a small aside, in which he looked, in 1939, when the man was not even in Parliament, when he was not even publicly known, to Hugh Gaitskell as one of the potential leaders of the Labour Party.

These judgments are worth summarising, if they warn us not to be too casual about the qualities which make one man a political leader, while another, of perhaps equal or even greater talent, such as Robert Boothby, languishes. If it is true that candidates for political leadership must simply be around at the right time, it is also true that they require certain qualities to ensure that they are around, and that their qualities are observed. Not even Alec Douglas-Home—for all his protestations—merely sat at home, waiting on events. He walked the streets, with the rest of them, displaying his favours with a misleading meekness which only the centuries could have nurtured.

THE WILLINGNESS TO STRIKE is the most obvious quality. Lloyd George, when at last he moved against Asquith, had no inhibitions, not even about the allies, some of them barely respectable, whom he was prepared to court and use. The relentless way in which Stanley Baldwin, an obscure back-bench member in 1918, toppled the Coalition Government in 1922, and established himself as leader of the Conservative Party in 1923, is one of the most unlikely stories in political history: but he proved that the will and the iron were there. Gaitskell, as we have seen, struck again and again during the crucial years between the Bevanite victories at Morecambe in 1952 and Attlee's resignation in 1955: his pursuit and eventual butchery of Morrison were remorseless. Above all, no one who has ever tried to inquire into the circumstances which led to Macmillan's emergence as leader of the Conservative Party can have the slightest doubt that, while Eden was still Prime Minister, recuperating in the West Indies, his Chancellor of the Exchequer was arranging his removal and his own succession: it was not surprising that it was with the Chief Whip that Macmillan chose to celebrate on the night of his appointment, for what he had to celebrate was the success of a calculated and ruthless political manoeuvre.

In contrast, it is hard, now, to respect, or even sympathise with, R. A. Butler. He probably had no chance in 1959: Macmillan had run rings round him before the event had even materialised. But he did have a chance in 1963. He could certainly have made it impossible for Douglas-Home to form a government: for Macmillan to recommend him, or the Queen to give him her commission, or he to carry it out. Butler had, in fact, been given—what few men in such a situation ever had—public demonstrations of the support of powerful ministers, and of one high party official. But he hung back, even when they led. They took the field, he skulked in his tent (more precisely, in the old St. Ermin's Hotel); they were ready for battle, he submitted. What other man has ever demonstrated quite so convincingly that his party was right in refusing to take him as leader?

This willingness to strike can also mean, at an early stage, the willingness to present oneself. After the Labour Party conference of 1960, during which Harold Wilson had taken an equivocal position in the debate on unilateral disarmament, he had a difficult decision to make. Should he, or should he not, contest Gaitskell in the annual election for the leadership of the Parliamentary Party? If he did so, he would be bound to lose; he would be open to the accusation of disrupting the party; and he would appear to identify himself with the unilateralist minority of the party at Westminster. On the other hand, if he did not stand, his reluctance might be interpreted as an endorsement of Gaitskell's position. Wilson, in the event, contested the election; and, if only in hindsight, it can be recognised as a crucial assertion of his willingness, and even fitness, to exercise authority. Such occasions do not come twice in politics. They have to be seized, whatever the possible consequences.

This willingness to strike—even, perhaps especially, at a colleague—is part of the general impression of command, of toughness, of ruthlessness, of iron, of the ability "to see it through the bad patches," which a party expects to find

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in a leader.[4] It is different, but not entirely separate, from political courage. Politics is too much a game of chance—to be played, as L. S. Amery said, "for one's own chosen goals, by one's own rules"—for a nerveless man to encounter its trials with equanimity, without giving way at the moment of crisis, without leaving colleagues, party, perhaps even country, in the lurch.

To be around at the right time, and to be ready to strike when the moment comes; it is hard to see that there are other qualities which explain the rise of some politicians to the top of the greasy pole, while others lag. Certainly, it is hard to detect any other qualities which explain the rise of the rather idiosyncratic collection of individuals given at the beginning. The reassurance—the only necessary reassurance—is that the possession of these qualities need not exclude the possession of others.

The Quality of Political Courage

THE WILLINGNESS to strike, as has been said, is different, but not separate, from political courage. When Liverpool sent his brother to France after Napoleon's escape from Elba, he wrote to him:

> In God's name, however, keep up your spirits, or otherwise you can be of no use. I do not mean that you should not see things as they really are, but you should not suffer yourself to despair. I never knew these feelings entertained by anyone, that they did not, however unknown to himself, tinge the language of the person who imbibed them, and thereby produce incalculable mischief.

It is hardly necessary to speak of the courage of a Chatham or a Churchill, at their moments of destiny, except to point out that, at important stages of their careers, they were men of precise political courage, contending, at home, against political forces capable of destroying them; nor at any length of the "great Parliamentary courage," which Gladstone attributed to Disraeli, "a quality in which I, who have been associated in the course of my life with some scores of Ministers, have, I think, never known but two whom I would pronounce his equal." These two were Peel and Russell. To them, we may add the name of Gladstone himself. There have been some heroic moments in the history of the Commons, and Morley was entitled to claim that one of them was the day in 1866 when Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill. He had split his party; the numbers arrayed against him were about to bear him down; he was 77 years old. Today, we remember little of the arguments which he used; but no one can read an account of the occasion without carrying away an image of valour, of resolution, of will and unquenchable conviction, of "strength of thew and sinew," as vivid as if he had joined the members of the day who sought a seat in the House at dawn.

Gladstone showed his greatest courage only in his later years, when he fought an almost lone battle for the idea which had come to obsess him. Until then, as even Morley pointed out, he behaved with more circumspection—like Condé, who, when complimented on his courage, said that he was careful never to call on it unless the occasion made it absolutely necessary. Disraeli had to act with exceptional courage throughout most of his career. He, more than any other person, formed out of the country party the Conservative Party which, to all intents and purposes, still exists today; and he did it (although almost everything about him, race, manner, character and intellect, offended the very men he aspired to lead) largely by invincible courage. He never demonstrated it more clearly than in his conduct over the Oaths Bill of 1854, which sought to relieve the Jews, amongst others, of the need to take the oath of allegiance as it stood. He was almost alone in his party in supporting the Jews; his principal colleagues were against him; the country gentlemen behind him could hardly have been more horrified than by a proposal to admit to the government of Britain those who denied the divinity of Christ. Yet, in spite of the fact that he was only just beginning to overcome the prejudices which his party felt against him and one false step would have done him incalculable injury, he came before the House, on more than one occasion, proclaiming his Jewish extraction, and announcing himself as a defender of the Jews. It was little wonder that Russell turned to Gladstone on the front bench, and expressed his admiration for a parliamentary leader "who could so intrepidly stand forward and enunciate doctrines which he knew the men behind him"

[4] About six months after Suez, I asked one of Eden's principal colleagues whether Eden had been really ill during the crisis. "Yes," he replied, "physically and mentally." "Would he have gone on, if his Cabinet had stood by him?" The minister paused, before answering: "Yes, I think so. But one cannot stand by a sick man in a crisis, can one?" Brutal? Proper.

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—whose support he personally needed—"abhorred."[5]

These are striking examples. But courage is needed from day to day, in the routine business of politics, the kind of courage described by W. H. Harcourt:

> To be firm when the vulgar are undecided, to be calm in the midst of passion and to be brave in the presence of panic are characteristics of those who are fit to be rulers of men.

These qualities may be needed at any time. Decisions have to be taken which will be unpopular, and the reasons for which are either not apparent at the time or cannot be fully explained to the House or the public. Many a minister has had to stand up in the House to defend a policy, able to state only half of his case lest he should imperil negotiations at the moment in progress or aggravate an already serious situation. Yet defend it he must, without showing any trace of despair or alarm, and without (if possible) giving even a grain of comfort to an opposition which is out for game. Everything which a politician does may become a public issue. Disasters are likely to befall him which no man in his position could have averted. He may be forced to take action which ideally he would never have considered. But still he must justify himself before the "most chilling and nerve-destroying audience", as Disraeli called it, in the world.

THE TEMPERATURE OF POLITICS is lower than in his days, but the House of Commons still has the capacity to put a minister on trial, although the occasions may seem less dramatic. One can still see men, accustomed to holding it, suddenly lose their grip in the middle of a speech, through some error of fact or some slight misjudgment of the mood of the members: errors and misjudgments which, in most other assemblies, would have counted for little. If a politician lacks the courage which such a test demands, he will more than likely lack the courage to pursue measures which he foresees will be unpopular.

Herbert Morrison quoted Harcourt's remark in the course of describing the "necessary but not very pleasing experience at the hands of a large body of my fellow-citizens" which he had to suffer during the war when he released Oswald Mosley from detention under Defence Regulation 18B. It was a particularly courageous act for a Home Secretary belonging to the Labour Party, even though he had the support of a war-time Coalition Cabinet. If Morrison had shown any sign of giving way before the passions of the mob—his own mob—he would not only have made nonsense of the traditions of the Home Office; he would certainly, in the eyes even of those he was placating, have finished himself.

It was this kind of political courage which seemed to leave him later. There was very little sign of his being able to see his party through the bad patches in 1951, even when one of the worst of these patches, the Abadan crisis, was partly of his own making. It is this which justifies Hugh Dalton's remark that "Morrison surprised me in the years that followed by his comparative lack of growth,"[6] and which explains why he never, during his life in the Labour Governments of 1945–51, looked like a potential prime minister. Even in the struggles against Aneurin Bevan and his followers after 1952, Morrison's courage failed him, and this was the real reason why Gaitskell, and not he, eventually became leader of the Labour Party. The vote on 14 December 1955, which gave Gaitskell 157 votes, Bevan 70 and Morrison only 40, was the final verdict of his parliamentary colleagues on an extraordinary politician who lacked the courage which is needed at the top.

At least twice, on the other hand, Gaitskell struck hard, struck in public, and struck at the right time. After the results of the elections to the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party had been announced at the annual conference in 1952, revealing a sweeping victory for Bevan and his associates, Morrison took to his bed. He eventually returned to the conference, to make a dignified and mollifying speech, which wrung applause from the very hands which a day or two before had plunged the knife in his back. It was a moving occasion, but it had very little to do with politics, the politics of the moment. Gaitskell, in contrast, was preparing a counter-attack. At the end of the week, he left Morecambe for Stalybridge, and there made a dramatic speech, in which he said that the constituency associations which had supported Bevan had been infiltrated by fellow-travellers—if not, indeed, by Communists. Many, at the time, thought he had overplayed his hand. But it was counter-attack which was needed at that moment, to rally the supporters

[5] W. F. Monypenny & G. E. Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli* (1914), vol. III, p. 78.

[6] Hugh Dalton: *The Fateful Years. Memoirs, 1931–1945*, p. 83.

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of the party's leadership in the constituencies, to hold the parliamentary party together at Westminster, and to make it clear that Bevan would be fought every inch of the way.

The second, and more famous, display of courage was Gaitskell's speech to the annual conference of the Labour Party at Scarborough in 1960, when he pledged himself, on the issue of unilateral nuclear disarmament, to "fight, fight and fight again" to bring the party back to "sanity." His actions and his speeches were, of course, criticised as an example of extreme stubbornness. Harold Wilson, for example, argued that, in terms of policy, Gaitskell was making controversy unnecessarily sharp by presenting it in such black-and-white terms; and that, in terms of party management, he was making his own position unnecessarily precarious by challenging so directly the authority of the party's annual conference. But the issue had already been presented in black-and-white terms by the unilateralists themselves; and Gaitskell saw quite clearly that, on such a vital issue, on which the party would be judged by the country, it was the authority of the party leader, and not that of the party conference, which needed to be asserted.

Whatever else may be said, the speech was a supreme example of political courage; and it worked. Within a year, by organisation and propaganda, the annual conference of the party was persuaded to reverse its decision; and Gaitskell, his authority so convincingly established, was able to move, a year later still, to rally the great majority of the party behind him in opposition to Britain's entry into the Common Market. Wilson may still believe that he could have handled the crisis within the Labour Party in 1960–61 differently from Gaitskell. But the fact remains that Gaitskell bequeathed to Wilson a party united by a necessary, if dramatic, exhibition of political courage.

A PARTY LEADER, once he becomes Prime Minister, must set the example of courage —of imperturbability—to his own ministers and his own followers. The life of a government is the life he gives it, sometimes in literal terms. Attlee, if he had shown more courage, could have seen his government and his party through the bad patches of 1951, so that it could fight (and perhaps even win) in more favourable conditions. He did not, and the long years of Conservative rule which followed had their origin in his uncharacteristic lack of grit in what admittedly were very unfavourable circumstances. Rosebery was guilty of much the same kind of timidity in 1895 when he decided to resign, after a "snap vote" in the House of Commons, rather than dissolve. There followed, much as there did sixty years later, a long period of Conservative rule.

As these examples illustrate, the quality of political courage is precisely political: it has little to do with impetuosity, or charisma, or even public demonstration. Politics are so much a matter of judging occasions—of hazards—of choosing the right time, and then exploiting it to the full—that a party leader must have the courage to await the right time, as well as to seize real opportunities boldly when they present themselves. Attlee had only to hold on until the "boom" which began in 1952, a "boom" which, in the conditions created by the Korean war, was quite foreseeable—and the history of the next decade, and especially of the Labour Party in the next decade, might have been very different. The accidents, the ups and downs, of politics are numerous. Without courage, a party leader is at their mercy.

The Least Party Man in his Party

THE SECOND QUALITY which is usually found in the most successful party leaders is something of a cross-bench mind. It is no accident that so many of the greatest politicians have seemed to live most happily on the margins of parties, have almost been coalitions in themselves.

For the first 27 years of his career, Gladstone was a Conservative, becoming a Liberal (in any sense at all) only in 1859. Even then, he was out of touch with many of the streams of thought in the Liberal Party, and in direct opposition to some of them. "The key to my position," he said once in old age, "was that my opinions went one way, my lingering sympathies the other." Disraeli's opinions, whatever one may make of them today, certainly meant little to the Conservatives arrayed behind him; his mind moved from pole to pole, and all that one can say is that the poles had been put there by himself, and were fixed. Lloyd George, as was shown by his dramatic proposal for a coalition government at the height of the constitutional crisis in 1910, lived naturally in coalitions, and was always at his best in the free atmosphere of

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"all the talents", rather than in the more confined one of party. Churchill entered and left parties whenever occasion beckoned and principle could be persuaded to provide an opportunity.

Even when they have not crossed party boundaries, the greatest politicians have nearly always had minds of their own, like the greatest of the Salisburys in his early years. They have often been men whom no party would find it easy to accommodate. This natural independence of mind is not a dead tradition. Of the five leaders of the Conservative Party since 1945, Churchill had resigned from the party once and then, after rejoining it, resigned again from the party's front bench; Eden had in 1938 set himself against the party's policy to the extent of resigning from one of the most important posts in the existing government; and Macmillan had opposed his party through most of the 1930s, in both its home and its foreign policy, even refusing the party whip.

All this, although it may seem curious in men who come to represent their parties in the public mind, is really quite natural. A party which is led by men who simply reflect its orthodoxy will be dull and imperceptive. The opinions and attitudes of a party can all too easily become rigid, unless it is led by politicians whose minds reach beyond party. This is one of the serious criticisms that can be made of Attlee's leadership of the Labour Party after 1949. The party had by then exhausted the ideas and policies which had helped to bring it back to power in 1945, and kept it busy for four years. From 1949 onward, there was much re-thinking inside the party, and some heart-searching. But this search for a new attitude and policy was given neither impetus nor direction by Attlee, who seemed content merely to repeat the party catchwords not even of yesterday, but of the day before yesterday.

A Labour critic of Attlee caught something of this when reviewing his autobiography:

> In every chapter one finds an utter obliviousness and disregard of theories and values which are outside Mr. Attlee's own range. Men and ideas are flattened down to a level at which he can comprehend them; and there is never a qualm expressed lest perhaps something is being missed. . . . After paying tribute to all which has been accomplished, the verdict of history on Mr. Attlee's competent revolution may be that it was the only event of its kind in history which contributed nothing new or imaginative to the political ideas with which men seek to illuminate human nature and its environment.[7]

Accepting the limited political philosophy which guided the Labour Party between 1918 and 1945, Attlee could, when that philosophy had been translated into practical acts, find no further nourishment elsewhere. His mind had become the mind of his party at a fixed period of its—and his—development; and, when it was starved, he could not feed it. Despite the efforts of those who succeeded him, the Labour Party took more than ten years to begin to adjust to conditions it had in part created.

More than the ordinary, or even the extraordinary, politicians who are his colleagues, the party leader must be an adjuster of different—possibly opposing—ideas, attitudes, and interests. To his desk, ultimately, when he is Prime Minister, must come the decisions in which party orthodoxy, even the party programme which he helped to construct at the previous election, are of little assistance. He, eventually, must decide how to allocate limited resources; which interests to appease and which to antagonise; what political support he can take the risk of losing; how to hold the electors, not bound by party allegiance, whose votes he and his party nevertheless need.

Of course, he must pay attention to party (and even party orthodoxy) in reaching these decisions. His party is one—the most necessary, maybe, but still only one—of the blocks of interest and support on which he relies. But, if he is the leader of the party, he is also the broker between its attitudes and attitudes which exist outside it; between the interests which it represents and other interests which cannot be dismissed in office as lightly as on the platform; between the unalterable facts of the nation's life, which every government must face, and the tendency of any party to believe that it can dare—without knowing how it will do.

By the force of his intellect and his character, Gladstone raised the ability to reconcile different ideas and attitudes to the power of genius. The most astonishing fact about his life is the way in which he moved towards liberalism while, at the same time, he was profoundly affected by the Oxford Movement, which had "come to life in order to check the liberal teaching of the time." The apparent contradiction is what

[7] *Anon* (presumably R. H. S. Crossman) in *New Statesman Profiles* 1957.

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makes him most interesting as a man and a politician:

> The answer is that the Oxford Movement had two aspects. It was hostile to Bentham and his utilitarian philosophy, and in that sense it was hostile to the fundamental idea that inspired a great many of the reforms of the nineteenth century. But it possessed a significance that made Mill . . . give high praise to its services to culture. "He used to tell us," Morley said, "that the Oxford theologians had done for England something like what Guizot, Villemain, Michelet, Cousin had done a little earlier for France; they had opened, broadened, deepened the issues and meanings of European history; they had reminded us that history is European; that it is quite unintelligible if it is treated as merely local."[8]

The result was that the inspiration which helped to make Gladstone "the greatest liberal in Europe" was quite different from that which the Benthamites, the Manchester School, or even the Evangelical movement, brought to the Liberal Party.

In Gladstone himself, the tensions were acute:

> Beneath the smooth expression, an unseen volcano blazed. . . . The controls were colossal, but Gladstone's mind was seismic. Deep inside it, the tensions of the age seethed in molten fury continuously, until, at intervals, the balance of forces at the surface was disturbed. Once his mind was set in a fresh pattern of conviction, he was visited by a sense of infallibility and became an incarnate moral and emotional force.[9]

But what an enrichment it was to be to the Liberal Party—which, otherwise, might have been so provincial and so narrow—to acquire as its leader a man who, when he first entered St. Peter's in Rome, suddenly felt "the pain and shame of the schism in the body of Christ's Church"; who, to the end of his life, doubted whether the great evils in society were so superficial that they could be cured by legislation; who found himself being impelled towards liberalism when, at a dinner in Paris, the French historian, Guizot, impressed on him the European view of Ireland, and his mind registered "a minor but distinct earthquake"; who was impelled further towards liberalism when he witnessed the trial of Poerio at Naples; who, as he talked with Cavour, in 1859, "felt that a great light had been vouchsafed to him"; and who eventually justified his acceptance of office in a Liberal Government by the one word, "Italy."

Disraeli, at the same time, drew on, and drew together, a remarkable number of the currents of the day in order—it was a characteristically paradoxical achievement—to oppose the spirit of the age. Out of their fusion in his own mind, he created "a powerful design for certain crucial elements in the social order . . . an intellectual and moral foundation for government policy then and after."[10] It is not necessary to list the currents here, but it is interesting to notice that, through "Young England," he drew inspiration from the Oxford Movement, as Gladstone also had done. This double influence of the Oxford Movement, on the greatest Conservative and the greatest Liberal Prime Minister of the 19th century, is not only a tribute to its intellectual vigour, and to John Henry Newman's especially, but also a vivid illustration of the role which the exceptional politician can play in fusing the ideas of his age. Both in their inspiration and in their influence, Gladstone and Disraeli were a great deal more than Bagehot's model of a constitutional statesman: "the one who most felicitously expresses the creed of the moment."[11] They helped to make it.

THESE MAY SEEM TO BE exalted examples, hardly relevant to our secular age. Two more recent, and more mundane, ones may therefore be worth giving.

Macmillan's early books and speeches, and the active work which he did in so many non-party and all-party committees, during the 1930s, clearly anticipated the politics of the 1950s and early 1960s. "The idea of planning," he wrote in 1934,

> is slowly but definitely gaining ground as the real nature of the problems now confronting us is revealed. It is a view which arises out of the realities of industrial and commercial life. It has found its adherents not so much among theorists as among those industrialists who see that it is in harmony with what they find it necessary to aim at in the daily conduct of their business.

In 1938, he was hammering away at the point, which so few then were willing to acknowledge, that the old arguments between socialism and capitalism were out of date:

> This argument between the advocates of Socialism and public enterprise, and the de-

[8] J. L. Hammond & M. D. R. Foot, *Gladstone and Liberalism* (1953).
[9] P. Magnus, *Gladstone* (1954).
[10] S. H. Beer, *Modern British Politics* (1965).
[11] Walter Bagehot, "The Character of Sir Robert Peel," in *Biographical Studies* (1902).

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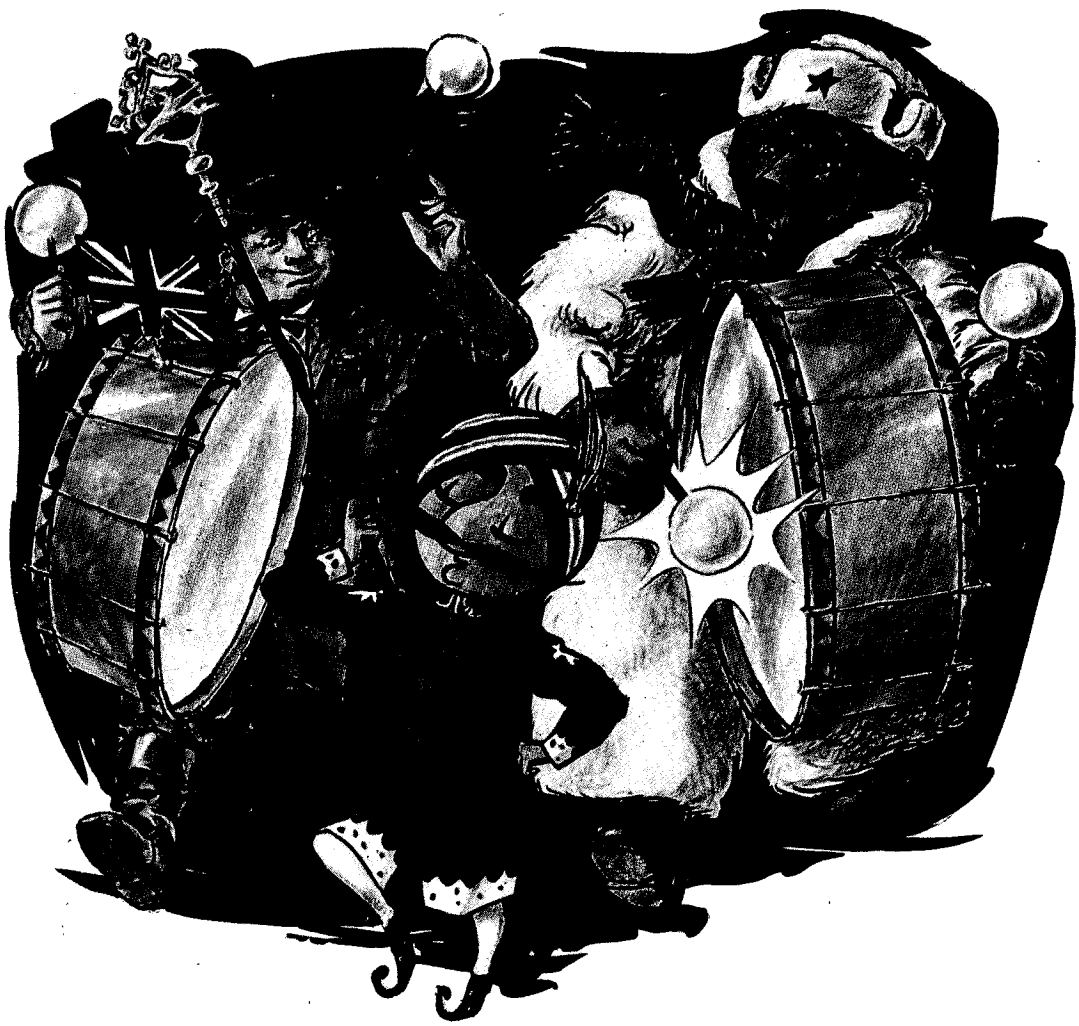

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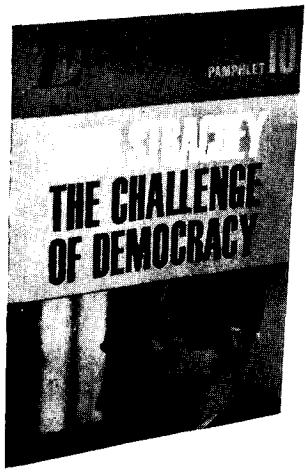

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> fenders of Capitalism and private enterprise, takes little or no account of the changes that are taking place all the time in the society they are arguing about.

In all of this, and in the ceaseless propaganda in which he engaged throughout the 1930s, Macmillan was displaying a far from ordinary insight into the nature of the issues confronting the country.

Significantly, a body of young members of the Labour Party was doing exactly the same kind of work, helping to create a new outlook: men such as Evan Durbin (who might have been a leader of the Labour Party) and Hugh Gaitskell. This outlook, Gaitskell wrote in 1933,

> marked in its way a new phase in socialist thought, different from that of the early Fabians and from the ideas associated with the stormy period before and after the first world war. It marked, one might say, in the field of thought, the transition from the pioneering stage to that of responsibility and power.[12]

When, in the late 1950s, Macmillan and Gaitskell faced each other across the floor of the House as leaders of their respective parties, they did so as two men who, even before the war, had foreseen the pragmatic politics which were to emerge after it, and had, indeed, helped to create them.

Traces of these early attitudes were to be found in them both—distinct in Hugh Gaitskell, a little blurred by the years in Harold Macmillan—when they became leaders. But what concerns us here is that they were both naturally men who reached beyond the orthodoxy of their parties, both of them with considerable intellectual daring, and Macmillan with considerable political daring, too. They both brought their parties into contact with ideas, attitudes, currents of thought, to which the parties were strangers.

BUT THE POLITICIAN, and especially the party leader, does not try to find the point of contact only between different ideas, but also between different interests. After 1895, there was a very noticeable broadening in the political outlook of Lloyd George. During the previous three years, he had been acting in the House of Commons primarily as a member of a small group of radical Welsh members within the Liberal Party: a ginger group, but one with mainly parochial concerns. After 1895, unlike his companions, he began to identify these concerns with much larger ones:

> His unerring political instinct told him that the interests of Wales could best be served by identifying them with those of the rising English democracy... the process of emancipation began in 1895.

Much the same kind of alliance was made by Gladstone and Bright in 1861, an alliance between popular forces and conservative constitutional methods; and it is exactly this ability and willingness to find the basis for such an identification which can lift some men to the top, while others fall behind.

Every electoral and parliamentary majority is a coalition of some kind—Wilson's in 1966, as much as Macmillan's in 1959—and the coalition is usually the creature of the party leader. He moves in the margins, where interests and ideas meet, knitting them together, by the actions of his government or the promises of his party, by his utterances, by his general posture, persuading different groups that their interests, at least temporarily, coincide with the interests of others. In all of this, the party leader acts as does every politician, but with greater gifts.

Stanley Baldwin's gifts—instincts—for this kind of brokerage were remarkable, and he managed to lend an almost romantic vision to what he did.

He was oppressed in 1919 and 1920 by the temper of the country. "The bitterness of the country," he wrote later, looking back, "was of the devil." He deliberately set out to remove this social bitterness, and the quick and almost demure conclusion of the general strike was a personal triumph. In the political field, he saw that, once the Labour Party had become the largest party in the country, it must be allowed, indeed encouraged, to govern as a constitutional party. "When the Labour Party sits on these benches," he declared as early as February 1923, "we shall all wish them well in their efforts to govern the country"; and, less than a year later, he assisted in the formation of the first Labour government by refusing to consider the possibility of a coalition between the Conservative and Liberal parties to keep it out. From then on, in his domestic policies, he set out to strengthen the constitutionalism of the Labour Party, to make sure that it became part of the political body of the country and not a group

[12] Hugh Gaitskell, in his introduction to E. F. M. Durbin's *The Politics of Democratic Socialism* (1954).

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which was alienated from it, and he probably did more to shape it than any of its own leaders.

Quite as deliberately, he set out to prevent the trade unions from developing any feeling of alienation from the social and economic life of the country; and he again succeeded to a degree which marks him as one of the great domestic prime ministers in British history. When the British people—ironically, in a situation which he had helped to create—had to call on, and discovered, deep reserves of unity in 1940, that unity had been, in part, the creation of Stanley Baldwin. There was no interest or group which had become alienated from the life of the country, which felt as if it were an *émigré* group within it.

His domestic achievement—he virtually governed the country from 1923 until 1937—deserves the title of statesmanship. But what he did, he did as a politician, tirelessly searching for the point of contact between different groups and different ideas, and using a supreme political artistry in politics to establish some common ground between them.

He was the least party man in his party; and, given a man who was so naturally a coalition in himself, the National Government—the myth of a National Government—was largely an irrelevance. The electoral system in Britain is so delicately balanced, puts the fate of parties and party leaders so much at the mercy of a comparatively scattered number of voters in a scattered number of constituencies, that even the least discerning party leader finds himself forced to consider groups and interests which are not naturally his supporters.

In the most perceptive party leader, this search for support takes him into deep explorations of the society in which he must act, and it is this that tempts us to see him as larger than life-size. Baldwin and Macmillan and Wilson have all, in our time, had uncanny perceptions of the British people, but their perceptions have been those of politicians, bringing together different ideas, appetites, and interests, in order personally to conquer and survive.

The Nature of Political Decision

WINSTON CHURCHILL had no choice in May 1940. He had been thrust into the position of Prime Minister in order to conduct a war more vigorously. If he had not done so, the parliamentary support on which he depended would have melted away, as it had melted from Chamberlain a week before. This is not to deny the courage which he then displayed, or the inspiration which he then gave. But if he had done otherwise, he could never have maintained the united political support he had been given.

Moments of crisis are not the best at which to try to discover the nature of political decision; yet it is worth reminding ourselves that, even at such moments, political decision is still subject to strictly political considerations. To the preciously non-political, Churchill's determination, in 1940, to seek the leadership of the Conservative Party, while leading a Coalition Government, was painful. But he required that political base, not only in Parliament, but in Cabinet. He would have been an extremely weak political animal, at the crises of the war, if he had had to argue in Cabinet—against the leaders of the two other parties—solely as a single, and dispensable, man of genius; and if, in Parliament, he had not controlled the Whip.

Every prime minister or party leader complains about the rationalisation of their decisions which is made by political commentators—and will, no doubt, be made by historians.[13] They protest that the decisions they take are far less self-conscious than observers imagine; that, day by day, questions arise, almost willy-nilly, and have to be settled, almost willy-nilly; that the business of political decision is primarily a matter of emptying the in-tray; and that, in this process, decision-making is hardly systematic.

This is obviously more true in politics than in any other activity. In a business, for example, there is one settled and recognisable aim, and most of the factors which influence a decision are calculable. This is not true in politics. It is never even certain that a decision is either necessary or desirable, and a great deal of politics is the avoidance, the legitimate avoidance, of decision. In fact, there is often a lot to be said for refusing to bring an issue to the point of decision, if this would provoke awkwardness, or controversy, or opposition. Strong government can consist in doing nothing at all.

It is not even clear that the determination of some of the great political issues in the past has owed as much as is commonly supposed to the politicians whose names are linked with them.

[13] The fact that they themselves proceed to rationalise their decisions in their own autobiographies is a whimsical demonstration of the vanity of human nature.

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He would be a brave historian who would confidently state that the repeal of the Corn Laws was the result of a decision by Peel. In fact, where one can detect personal decision most clearly, it begins to be unpolitical. "Yes! I am prepared to go forward without anybody," said Gladstone, of his Home Rule Bill, in 1886: and they were not the words of a politician. The whole point of politics is to go forward with as large a body of support as one can, for the occasion, attract.

IN EXAMINING THE POLICIES of the Labour Government, between 1945 and 1951, S. H. Beer comments appropriately:

> Certainly, critical choices were made in a brave and intelligent effort to master circumstances. The story of the Government's actions was not a story of drift and inability to choose. Yet the outcome was so little foreseen or intended by the Government, the party, or any leading person that "decision" is a misnomer if applied to the events as a whole from which the new party purpose began to merge. "Policy determination" describes this process better than policy decision.

This is accurate enough; but it is accurate of most governments, and not only of the Labour Government of 1945–51.

The main impression which politicians give when confronted by a great issue is, not of decision, but of feeling their way to some determination—or simply some termination—of it. This phraseology is helpful. The politician's real ambition is to "have an end" of an issue, so that he may turn to empty the in-tray. When the question whether Turkey should be invited to join NATO came before the Cabinet, every aspect of it, political and strategic, was discussed by various ministers, not least by Aneurin Bevan. At last, when the moment came for Attlee to "collect the voices," he said abruptly: "Fought against the Turks at Gallipoli. Would rather have them on our side than on theirs. We'll have them in." With that, the matter rested.[14] That, perfectly if a little whimsically illustrated, is political decision: the settling of an issue simply out of the need to settle it.

Throughout 1962, Macmillan moved, publicly and perceptibly, towards his eventual announcement that Britain would begin negotiations for her entry into the Common Market. No one who followed the movement of his mind closely during that spring and summer—and he revealed its movement in a remarkable series of carefully worded pronouncements—could fail to notice the accumulation of circumstances which was gradually leaving him no choice. The strength of opinion in favour of entry in the business community; the need of the Conservative Party to find a major and differentiating issue which it could make its own; the policy of the "wind of change," and the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth, both of which opened to question the Commonwealth's reality as a political and economic entity; even Macmillan's own desire to perform a great and historic act: all of these pushed him towards his eventual announcement, but it would be extremely difficult to point to any moment of real, and not merely formal, decision.

During the next three months, Gaitskell moved into vehement opposition to the proposed negotiations. Again, it was impossible not to notice the circumstances which were helping to push him in that direction: the need to unite the great majority of his party, after the conflicts of the past two years; the understandable anxiety to range himself, for once, with the left and the left of centre; the suspicions of the trade unions; the party's passionate, if romantic, commitment to the idea of a multi-racial Commonwealth, of which Britain was the leader. As much as Macmillan, he was the creature of an accumulation of political circumstances, most of them connected, in some way, with the continuing search for political support.

This is not to deny that both of them may have been personally convinced of the validity of their policies and their arguments. Neither of them, indeed, could have defended their policies, at their party conferences that year, with as much persuasiveness as they did, if they had not become personally, even strenuously, committed. But all the evidence suggests that the conviction, in each case, and especially the strength of the conviction, came after the "policy-determination," and that the "policy-determination" was, to a very large extent, dictated by circumstances.

Was there decision—the power to choose—in the acceptance of the American loan in 1945, the terms of which, Dalton told the House of

[14] Told to the author by one of the Ministers present. It should be pointed out that the outlandish reason which Attlee gave was not necessarily the decisive reason in his mind. But it served to close the argument, there and then.

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Commons, met neither his expectations nor his desires? In the determination to hand over power to one or more Indian governments in 1948, after the failure to find any basis for co-operation between the Moslem and the Hindu communities? In the readiness to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, a step which both Russian and American policies virtually dictated? In the withdrawal from Palestine, which was merely the recognition, and the abandonment, of an untenable position? In the Labour Government's steady retreat, between 1947 and 1950, from physical planning? In none of these situations was the freedom of choice sufficiently clear to allow us to talk confidently of "decision."

Of course, the personalities of the leading members of the Government affected the way in which the situations were met. Attlee's gesture to India was wholly in his own style; Bevin's embroilment in Palestine had deep personal roots, as also did his instinctive hostility to Russian designs in Europe. In almost every —if not every—instance, decision amounted to little more than the early or late determination to accept the facts of a situation, when not to accept them would have strained, beyond endurance, "both material resources of wealth and immaterial ones of time and support."

It may be objected that the examples given are unfair: that, in each of them, external factors, beyond the control of any government, intervened. At least, in the legislative programme of a government, it will be said, choice is available, and decision is possible. But even this is not entirely clear.

IT IS WORTH TRACING the way in which the proposal to nationalise iron and steel entered the Labour Party's programme, and then remained in it. S. H. Beer traces its origins to an initiative taken by the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation in 1931, when it moved a resolution at the T.U.C. proposing that the industry be brought under the control of public utility corporations. Three years later, the Economic Committee of the General Council of the T.U.C. presented a report on the nationalisation of iron and steel, which clearly provided for public ownership; and, at the Labour Party conference in the same year, a proposal for the nationalisation of iron and steel was included in the party programme. In 1935, a pledge to nationalise the industry was given in the party's election manifesto; and, in 1944, the T.U.C. put iron and steel among a long list of industries to be nationalised. At the party's conference in 1944, Ian Mikardo won its support for an amendment which would commit the party to the nationalisation of "land, large-scale building, heavy industry, and all forms of banking, transport, and fuel and power." Then, early in 1945, the National Executive Committee appointed a campaign committee, under the chairmanship of Herbert Morrison, to take charge of preparations for the coming election. At a meeting of the committee, on 1st April, Morrison hinted that it might be desirable to drop the proposal to nationalise "this complicated and troublesome industry." Dalton objected, saying that, if it were dropped, he would refuse to support the policy declaration at conference, and that Morrison and Greenwood could then explain to the delegates why this item "had now vanished." The proposal was then included in the 1945 election manifesto.

In 1947,[15] the Labour Government reached an agreement with the British Iron and Steel Federation that nationalisation should take the form of "practical supervision of the industry," leaving the ownership of individual firms undisturbed. A minority in the Cabinet objected to this compromise; and that minority was converted into a majority as a result of agitation inside the parliamentary party. The Iron & Steel Bill was then carried through both Houses, under the Parliament Act of 1949, and brought into operation after the general election of 1950.

Since then, in spite of the noticeable lack of enthusiasm of the party's leadership, the nationalisation, or rather re-nationalisation, of iron and steel has been "a kind of touchstone of socialist intentions" within the party, to which its leaders have had to concede. To claim that, in these circumstances, they have had real choice, any genuine power of decision, is to ignore the fact that they have been bound by their party inside and outside the House of Commons. Since 1953, the re-nationalisation of iron and steel has been the easiest price for a leader of the Labour Party to pay for the support of its more left-wing members.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP is the eliciting—even the manufacture—of support: support in the country, support in Parliament,

[15] See John P. Mackintosh, *The British Cabinet* (1962).

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support among powerful and interested groups, and support abroad from allies. (Harold Wilson demonstrated clearly, during his first government, the precise domestic political importance of support from the United States; and his policies reflected it.) Political decision is solely the result of this unending search for support. One leader may have such gifts of command that he is able to treat important bodies of support (including his own party) with more disdain than another leader could afford. A leader of the Labour Party is naturally more sensitive to some kinds of support than a leader of the Conservative Party, and *vice versa*. But, with however much style it may be done, with whatever pretence to purity of motive and concern for the national interest, the origin of all political decision is the ceaseless adjusting and reconciling of different ideas, attitudes, and interests, by which the politician discovers and retains the support which alone makes effective action by him possible, and on which his survival depends.

Character and intelligence and ability, therefore, matter: a strong and able leader will have the advantage in controlling, and keeping in proportion, possibly even in check, the interests and ideas of those whose support he needs. He can more easily make a favourable bargain with them, and so, in fact, enjoy relatively more freedom of choice and power of decision. But his personal character and ability can properly be regarded only as one more factor in the constant balancing and adjusting of different forces which are politics.

If he has style, or wit, or aplomb, or even grandeur, these are important, not because they inspire or elevate, but because they weigh in the balance in his relationships with the individuals and groups whose support he seeks. The moral qualities which people too often look for in their politicians—perhaps not expecting to find them in their archbishops—are significant only in so far as they alter these mundane, interested, political relationships. What Macmillan did, when in 1958 he dismissed the resignations of his three Treasury ministers as "these little local difficulties," was to display the extent to which, by the competence and style of his leadership, he had so altered the relationship between a prime minister, on the one hand, and his colleagues and his parliamentary party, on the other, that even so sensational a political event could be lightly dismissed. Similarly, his butchery of his Cabinet in 1962, and the acute *malaise* which it induced in the party at Westminster and also in the party in the country, revealed that that relationship had changed again: that his style and prestige were no longer such weighty factors as they had once been.

IT MAY BE OBJECTED that, in the description of political leadership and political decision which has been given here, they have been stripped of all purpose, of all claim to rationality, certainly of all morality. But it is one of my contentions that, in so far as these exist in politics at all, they are supplied partly by the electors, partly by parties, and partly by the impersonal working of a tried political system, sustained by and itself sustaining habits and customs which are deeply rooted in society. Beside these, political leaders are transient figures, the decisions they take owing much less to them than the rationalisations of political commentators and historians often suggest.

There is a tendency today to despise political leaders because they are politicians, and praise them—or seek to praise them—for being saviours or magicians. This is a false perspective. Political leaders should be admired as politicians, and distrusted if they claim, or appear, to be anything else.

"*The Patience of Politics*"

THE PHRASE is R. A. Butler's.[16] It expresses, more vividly than any other single phrase, the character of politics in a free country.

In the politician, it demands that he should accustom himself to the inevitable fluctuations of political fortunes; that he should find defeat and failure only an invitation to renewed efforts; that he should overcome the galling frustrations of enforced idleness and opposition, and be able to look forward to ten years in the wilderness with equanimity and self-assurance. It demands that he should never try to seize imaginary initiatives or seek speedy results; that he should wait calmly for his opportunity; that he should never despair or panic. It demands that he should bear obloquy, misrepresentation, and injuries without complaint; that he should expect no gratitude; that he should remain silent when one word would justify him, if that word would injure his cause. Above all, it demands that he should never,

[16] Used in an interview with the author (1959).

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whatever the provocation, cease to trust in the right instincts of a free people; that he should believe always in their ability, in the long run, to distinguish truth from falsehood, justice from injustice, the sound from the meretricious; that he should, in this belief, patiently pursue the task of bringing different ideas and interests into contact with each other, never doubting that the arts of a free government are among the most rewarding of all the arts of a civilised people.

Of a free people, if they are fit to engage in a free government, an equal patience is demanded: the patience to trust in the slow working of their institutions; to believe that much in their working may be incomprehensible only because they are ignorant of its purpose; to recognise that many of the inevitable compromises of the political processes are necessary only because their own multifarious interests and appetites have to be consulted. They must be patient of the politicians themselves; of their vanities and their peculiarities, which are usually only the vanities and peculiarities of themselves, but appearing larger than life; and of their weaknesses and faults, until these are seen to be pernicious. Above all, they too must be patient enough to trust in the right instincts of the House of Commons; to believe that, in the long run, it will respond to common sense, justice and truth; and, before scorning it, to remember that it was they who chose it and that, if they wish it, the remedy is, by virtue of the free government they enjoy, theirs to employ, without fear of interference by the courts, by the police, or by any civil authority.

LASTLY, THERE IS the imperial patience of the political process itself. Politics in a free state may be compared with the movement of a great river once it has reached the plains. The rushes and falls of the mountain streams are behind it, all of them tributaries to its main stream; now it flows, broad and slow, through the meadow, depositing its silt year by year, nourishing the land through which it makes its way. So politics should move, gathering its strength from every active force in society, however ambitious or angry, fed by every living idea, however tempestuous or romantic, but in the end seeking only to leave some small deposit which will enrich society for future generations, while carrying the mud out to sea or letting it sink to the bottom.

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Leif the Lucky

South from the pack-ice of my solitude
I sailed into the Vinland of your arms.
Where, bending to your breast to pick out flint-
Arrows left by some dark forerunner, I taste

Dew fit for Thor. So drunk am I
On maples, wild wheat, grapes heady in thickness,
I'd dream I was your last discoverer—
Did not the gods say other ships will round

Cape Cod, tack marvelling up Nantucket Sound,
Deny the ignorant map I made of you.
Every Columbus has an Eriksson,
And Martha's Vineyard shall be found again.

D. M. Thomas

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Edward Shils

The Sanctity of Life

TO PERSONS who are not murderers, concentration camp administrators or dreamers of sadistic phantasies, the inviolability of human life seems to be so self-evident that it might appear pointless to enquire about it. It is embarrassing as well because, once raised, it seems to commit us to beliefs we do not wish to espouse. Yet because of a conjunction of circumstances, it is worthwhile to discuss it.

One of these circumstances is the decline of Christian belief about the place of man in the divine scheme and the consequent diminution of its adduction as a criterion in the judgment of the worth and permissibility of human actions. As long as it was believed that man was created and had been assigned a destiny by God, it seemed evident that man's life was a sacred entity. It was sacred because man was a manifestation of the source and plan of the universe; for that reason his biological vitality and his soul (or mind) were not to be subjected to the transforming manipulations of other men. The cognitive content of Christian doctrine, and above all the grandiose Christian symbolisation of man's origin and destiny, have lost much of their appeal. Large sections of contemporary Western societies, particularly the highly educated, do not, by and large, believe in the immortality of the soul. They probably do not believe in a soul at all. (Some of them even allege that they do not believe in the existence of mind.) If there is no God, no divine creation, no immortality of the soul, no redemption, why should man's life be regarded with any more reverence than we regard the lives of wild and domestic animals which we hunt and eat, or pets which we breed and cherish?

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Another of the epochal circumstances which has caused us to raise the question is the advancement of the life sciences and the technological possibilities based on them. Physiological knowledge has been in the process of growth for three centuries but in recent decades its progress has become much more fundamental. (The advance is to some extent a function of the great improvement in instrumental technology.) Surgery is also old but it has become vastly more daring in its undertakings and proficient in its accomplishments in recent decades. The life sciences seem on the verge of an efflorescence like that through which the physical sciences passed during the first half of the present century. They are beginning to attract talents—of the quality and in large numbers—such as physics attracted in its recent very great period. As a result, life scientists and physicians and surgeons are acquiring the knowledge and the capacities to intervene purposefully and effectively in the course of the life of individuals and of the reproduction of generations such as they have never possessed before.

Alongside of these heightened powers of observation of the human organism and intervention in its vital processes, the powers of observing—of seeing and hearing—and of reaching into the social behaviour of human beings, have also increased correspondingly. These latter developments are in part functions of technological improvement: in part they are functions of greater curiosity—greater sympathy and more scientific detachment—and an aspiration for a more far-reaching surveillance and control, which are thought to be called for by the larger size of the corporate bodies into which so much of modern society is organised. Once again, the potentiality of the technology and the power of those who are its masters give rise to almost shapeless apprehension.

WE LIVE ALSO in an epoch in which one of the most famous countries, Germany, not particu-

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larly de-Christianised as compared with the other countries of the modern world, participated in the deliberate murder of numerous millions of persons of alien ethnic stocks. Mankind was accustomed to the destruction of lives by war incidental to the pursuit of military ends, and by murder by individuals out of powerfully passionate and transient impulses. The Nazi destruction was, however, so unprecedented in its scale, organisation, persistence, and "rationality" that many sensitive persons have come to feel that we live unsteadily suspended over an abyss of unlimited murderousness. Another memorial of this epoch is the dropping of the two nuclear bombs at the end of the Second World War. Each of these destroyed more human lives than any other single and separate action performed by a small number of men had ever done before. The nuclear weapons were made possible by the scientific research done in the present century by some of the greatest minds of human history.

The fading of Christian belief and the plausible confidence of the bio-medical sciences, acting jointly with our awareness of the destructive capacities of sadism served by large-scale organisation—which was also occasionally justified by the invocation of pseudo-scientific genetic doctrines and which was attended by some alleged medical experiments—and of genuinely outstanding scientific genius in the service of, or utilised for, military purposes in the atomic bomb, have raised a fundamental question. How is the human race as we have known it, with all its deficiencies, to be protected from the murderous and manipulative wickedness of some of its members and the scientific and technological genius of others?

Each of these major factors working alone would have raised questions about the grounds on which one man's life or individuality may be interfered with, changed or discontinued, and the factors which might extend or restrict such acts of intervention. Their coincidence renders it desirable to consider the whole problem more closely. This is why we ask the questions as to whether life is sacred, and as to how far morality permits and how far the law should allow us to intervene in reproduction, the course of life, and the constitution of individuality and privacy.

DESPITE the diminution of theological belief among the educated, many persons, including the educated, experience a sense of abhorrence in the face of the new or prospective capacities of geneticists, neuro-surgeons, psychiatrists, psychologists, and electronics engineers to intervene in what has hitherto been regarded largely as given by man's ancestry and his "natural" cognitive and moral powers. The loosening of the hold of ancestry, the circumvention of normal sexual intercourse as a precondition of procreation, the modification of memory, temperament, and sensory experience, all produce an effect of shock in many persons. The shock is not just the shock of surprise in the presence of novelty. It seems to possess elements of a deep abhorrence or revulsion. We see it in the struggles of courts and lawyers to cope with these new facts of human existence. We see it in the responses of those who still accept the Christian view of man, and we see it amongst the agnostic humanists who think that their view of the world is entirely secular and utilitarian. But when it comes to the formulation of an intellectually coherent and acceptable justification of the sense of abhorrence, there seem to be difficulties.

Why do so many persons experience this vague and sometimes passionate revulsion at the thought of a deliberate modification of the genetic determinants of the life of a human being—or of the modification of the personality by a neuro-surgical operation—or of the observation and recording of a conversation which is believed by the participants to be held away from the awareness of anyone except themselves? Can this revulsion be explained by a persisting commitment to the doctrine that man is a creature of a divine act and that it is not for man himself to undertake to form or modify the highest of God's creatures? This explanation is reasonable for those who are believing Christians or Jews.

What about those who experience this abhorrence but who are, as far as they know, not subscribers to the view that man is God's creature, that his soul is a part of a divine scheme and that it does not fall within man's proper jurisdiction to tamper with it? One interpretation of this response is that the latter are the victims, unwitting to be sure, of the religious conception of man, even though they themselves do not believe in any religion. The tree of religious belief has been felled but the roots are still in their minds. Their revulsion might be interpreted as nothing but a vestigial feeling left over from beliefs to which they no longer accord validity.

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It is quite possible that there is some truth in this interpretation, but I doubt whether it is really the whole truth. If it is wholly true, then the ground in reason for the revulsion disintegrates. The revulsion which many people feel in contemplation of the prospect of human intervention in the chain which binds us to our ancestry, in the constitution of our individuality, and in the islands of privacy which surround individuality, would appear then to be no more than a prejudice, utterly irrational and unjustifiable by rational argument.

I MYSELF DO NOT share this latter view either of the motivation of those who feel the revulsion against the manipulation of life and individuality or of the rationality of the grounds in principle for being morally distrustful or repelled by these activities which I will refer to as "contrived intervention." It seems to me that the apprehension about the intervention of medical, psychological, and electronic technology has an even deeper source in human existence than is to be found in Christian theology. The source of the revulsion or apprehension is deeper than the culture of Christianity and its doctrine of the soul. Indeed, it might be said that the Christian doctrine was enabled to maintain its long prosperity and to become so effective because it was able to conform for so many centuries to a deeper, proto-religious "natural metaphysic." Cultural traditions play a great part in sustaining the sense of revulsion but they themselves would not go on if they were not continuously impelled by this "natural metaphysic."

Human beings do have a conception of the "normal" or the "natural" and it is not simply a function of what is statistically the most frequent or a product of indoctrination, although both play a part in forming its content and maintaining it. Much of this conception of the "normal" or the "natural" centres on heterosexuality, lineage ties, and the integrity of the human organism and its memory.

Such developments as the transplantation of organs, the implantation of substitute organs made from inorganic materials, the instigation and control of human reproductive processes independently of sexual intercourse (artificial inovulation and insemination), the prospective modification of genetic constitution, the modification of personality qualities by pre-frontal lobotomy, electrical-shock therapy, the transformation of memory by electronic devices or chemical substances, the pharmaceutical transformation of the senses and the imagination, etc., all generate in different ways among a variety of persons some apprehension about the dangers of deviation from the "normal" or the "natural" which are obscurely intimated by these increased powers. These apprehensions are not just vestiges of archaic theological traditions. They are direct responses to sacrilege.

THE RESPONSE IS accentuated by the fact that these very possibilities are greeted by numerous persons with great enthusiasm. Those who are put off by these new possibilities, who shudder at the sight or thought of this new Promethean aspiration to do things which lay hitherto beyond human powers, are further alarmed by the enthusiasts. There is a more widespread anxiety about the moral status of these interventions and about the institutional controls which would restrict their uses for diabolical purposes and which would seek to develop legal rules and institutions adequate to deal with new conceptions or criteria of death, parenthood, etc.

Indeed it is often the unqualified enthusiasm of the proponents and prophets of "contrived intervention" which disturbs and alarms those who would have misgivings enough about the new possibilities without having to confront the enthusiasts. It must, however, be acknowledged that the enthusiasts stand in a great tradition. The improvement of the physical quality of life, the aspiration for a life without pain or unhappiness, the improvement in human powers and the pleasure in the exercise of the powers of knowing and constructing—the prizing of these accomplishments is part of our most valuable traditions. Yet there are probably also some motives which are less worthy—aspirations to omnipotence, desires to manipulate the individuality and to intrude on the privacy of human beings and therewith to enjoy the experience of their degradation.

These latter motives, to the extent that they are thought to exist, reinforce the apprehensions about Prometheanism. It should be remembered however that Prometheus was a benefactor of the human race who suffered because he sought to displace the gods by diffusing their powers among men. Those who stand uneasily apart from the recent bio-medical and technological advances might not believe that there are cer-

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tain kinds of knowledge which belong only to God; they are not, however, confident about the wisdom or the self-restraint of man in dealing with the sanctity of life and in respecting the "natural" or the "normal" in which that sacredness is incorporated.

Obviously, these conceptions have been influenced by Christian culture but they are not simply left-over fragments from a Christianity which has begun to recede.

THE CHIEF FEATURE of the proto-religious, "natural metaphysic" is the affirmation that life *is* sacred. It is believed to be sacred not because it is a manifestation of a transcendent creator from whom life comes: it is believed to be sacred because it is life. The idea of sacredness is generated by the primordial experience of being alive, of experiencing the elemental sensation of vitality and of fearing its extinction. Man stands in awe before his own vitality, the vitality of his lineage and of his species. He stands in awe before the natural order in which that vitality is maintained. The sense of awe is the attribution of sanctity, and all else which man feels to be sacred derives its sanctity because it controls or embraces that sacred vitality of the individual, the lineage and the species.

The fear of the extinction of vitality, of one's own organism, of the species and of one's own lineage, testifies to a primordial attachment to an elemental fact. What is at work here is not merely the attachment of the individual human organism which experiences and appreciates its own vitality; it is also an appreciation of the continuity of the vitality of one's own breed and progeny, unborn and unknown, the vitality of the territorial and civil community of which one is a member, and of the vitality of the species. Within this context, these are thought to be "normal" or "natural" modes of embodiment of the vital. When we speak of the sanctity of life, it is of these forms of life that we speak.

To say that the idea of the sacred is at bottom the appreciation of vitality requires some explanation—because it seems to be so contradictory to the usual idea which asserts that the sacred lies outside and beyond both the individual organic and the collective carriers of vitality. It is often asserted that these are sacred because they are infused or touched by or generated by transcendent sacred powers. My own view is that the transcendent sacred is a construction which the human mind itself has adduced, to account for and to place in a necessary order the primordial experience of the actual embodiment of vitality to which it attributes sacredness. The transcendent sacred is valued because to it are imputed the powers which are thought to have generated, which maintain, enhance and protect human vitality. The ultimate laws which govern human vitality and its manifestations—whether they be the laws of the physical and organic universe disclosed by scientific research, whether they be the properties of divinity disclosed by revelation, the study of sacred books and theological analysis, or the laws of society disclosed and promulgated by research, reason and authority —possess their property of sacredness or sanctity because they are believed to govern, underlie, account for, guide and control human vitality. They possess sanctity, or rather have it attributed to them, because they explain why life—and the universe which is its frame and ground, and society which enfolds and contains it—exists and because they control its movement, whether they do so through the laws of the universe of physical and organic nature or in the form of the laws of society in general or of a particular society.

IF MAN DID NOT PRIZE his own vitality, the sacred and its vast symbolic elaboration into cosmogonies and theologies would not exist. It has been created and has held dominion over so many human beings through much of the course of history because of the need to place in an order of power and justice the vicissitudes of human vitality. If life were not viewed and experienced as sacred, then nothing else could be sacred. This is true of societies which are regarded as increasingly secular as well as of those which for their entire history have lived with a powerful admixture of traditional religious belief and practice.

IF HUMAN BEINGS attribute sacredness to human life, why do so many human beings destroy life, and condone its destruction? Why are they so apparently indifferent to the lives of their fellow men?

Rulers until well into modern times in most parts of the world, and even now in many, have been and are largely indifferent to the vital condition of their subjects and countrymen.

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Generals have often thrown away the lives of large numbers of their soldiers. Churches and states have persecuted and destroyed lives. Governmental authorities have destroyed those who have, in fact or symbolically, endangered the political and social order.

Often those who deny the sanctity of particular individual lives do so on behalf of institutions which they themselves regard as sacred. Moreover, the incumbents of the institutional roles to which sacredness is attributed frequently regard their own sanctity as having overriding rights *vis-à-vis* other claimants to sanctity. States and churches which regard themselves as possessing sanctity do not find it difficult to disregard or deny the sanctity of the lives of particular individuals, while believing themselves still committed to the sanctity of life as such.

But it is not just the custodians of collective sanctity who infringe on the sanctity of individual lives. Murders by private citizens are common to say the least; multitudes are killed inadvertently by careless or incompetent motor car drivers; human lives are abbreviated by man-made pollution of the air. Violent hatred and sheer indifference show that the sense of the sanctity of life is often faint and feeble. It is clear that the sense of the sanctity of individual life is not in exclusive possession of the field of forces which control human life.

Nonetheless, the occurrence of war, murder, capital punishment, torture and indifference to human suffering no more invalidates the hypothesis of the widespread affirmation of the sanctity of life than the fact of suicide annuls the proposition of the near universality of the individual's appreciation of his own vitality and its continuance. The real problem is how to explain the coexistence of these two contradictory tendencies.

SENSITIVITY to the sacred is unequally distributed among the members of any given society. It is also intermittent in its operation and of uneven intensity in the extent to which it attributes sacredness to different individuals and collectivities. Some lives are regarded as more sacred than other lives. (This is true both with respect to the sanctity of the vitality of the individual and to the various forms and symbols of transcendent powers in which the sacredness of life is objectified). There is a gradation of "sanctity" moving from the individual outward—first through his kinship and affectional attachments, then local, national, class, ethnic group, and culture, becoming more attenuated and patchier as it reaches into other countries, continents, and races. Just as the personal affections diminish as they radiate outward, so the sense of identity constituted by a sense of shared sanctity also diminishes—although it has far greater radiative capacity than personal affection. Is there a point of disjunction in the downward curve of attribution of sanctity? There seems to be such a point where it is thought that primordial or genetic affinity ends or becomes very thin. There is less concern for the lives of those outside the presumptive genetic network of which we regard ourselves as a part. Tribe, caste, ethnic group, nationality and the national state—the boundaries of these groups are the points of disjunction, beyond which human life is less sacred than it is within.

Yet much destruction of life takes place within primordial groups and in civil communities. Members of families are cruel to each other and a substantial proportion of all murders occurs within families. There is in fact no situation in which the acknowledgement of the sanctity of life is guaranteed.

Indeed, in the very fact of its sanctity lies some part of the danger to which it is exposed. Sanctity calls forth sacrilegious dispositions. The affirmation of vitality arouses an impulse to destroy it. (Conversely, the awareness of these destructive, desecrating impulses calls forth a protective reaffirmation of the sanctity of life, and one which is indeed often fused with destructive impulses of its own—as in the case of capital punishment for murder and treason.)

Detachment, the absence of a sense of affinity, makes injury and destruction easier—although there is a total sense of disaffinity only at the psychopathological margins. Thus in most cases of destruction there is probably some element of a sense of affinity, and some sense of the sacredness of life, which is overpowered by fear and hatred and sacrilegious impulses.

ALL THAT I have been saying so far is descriptive. The question still remains: is human life really sacred? My answer is that it is, self-evidently. We participate in it through our own membership in the species, through our own humanity. The sacredness of life is given by our being alive. Its sacredness is a pri-

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mary experience and the fact that many human beings act contrarily, or do not apprehend it, does not change it. The fact that many people tell lies, and the fact that scientific truths cannot be appreciated except by those who have been trained to appreciate them, do not make scientific propositions any less truthful nor do they abolish the intrinsic value of scientific truth.

But even if my affirmation is affirmed, our problems are still far from solution. The proposition that life is sacred is no more than a guiding principle. The forms of human life that are sacred are however so variegated, so often in tension with each other, and so resistant to being placed on a clear-cut scale of degrees of sacredness, that infinitely difficult problems still remain in deciding what is permissible or intolerable.

I should like therefore to examine some of the major modes of "contrived intervention" in the light of the guiding principle.

I should state at the outset that, although I am not an enthusiast for "contrived intervention," and in fact am distrustful of those who envisage an entirely new and wholly better humanity in consequence of the development of the life sciences and certain types of bio-medical and other technologies, I do not regard the problem, at least as it appears at present, as really very worrying. To begin at the simplest levels, we have always accepted the surgery which excises a diseased and dispensable organ, such as a gall bladder or even a lung. We have always accepted the surgery which replaced a non-functioning or diseased part of the body by an artificial substitute such as a false tooth or a wooden leg. Does the introduction of a plastic aorta represent a qualitative change from a porcelain tooth? Is it more of a deformation of individuality? Clearly not. Blood transfusions, too, have been accepted even though they go further than the other types of surgery by the introduction of substances from the body of another human being. This would appear to verge on the infringement of individuality. But the fact is that the introduction of blood or a kidney from another human being, living or dead, works, to the extent that it works at all, only if the organism asserts its systemic coherence and integrates the foreign element into itself. A kidney and blood are alien substances but the organism remains an organism and assimilates them into its biological system or individuality. Hence, I do not think that the vitality of the individual human organism is infringed by such interventions. The organism as a whole retains its coherence and its continuity, and its vitality is in fact extended and reinvigorated. Surgical technology as it is working today, or is likely to work in the future, does not infringe on the sanctity of life. Rather the opposite: it affirms the sanctity of life by extending and enhancing vitality and it offers no affront to individuality. It raises no moral problems beyond those which medical practice has always had to face.[1]

Since such "reconstructions" are not undertaken without the consent of the patient and/or the responsible members of his or her family, ethically and logically the situation is the same here as in all medical treatment. The physician is the expert who proposes courses of action but it is not within his powers—given the traditional pattern of medical belief and practice[2]—to impose a given course of action indifferent to the will and assent of the patient or his legitimate custodian.

Additional considerations arise when we come to artificial insemination (AID), artificial inovulation and "genetic engineering." "Genetic engineering" and artificial human inovulation are at present only prospects, and the former is not even a near one: they are not yet real issues. It is, however, appropriate to discuss them because they are at the centre of the apprehensions which are aroused by other forms of contrived intervention. They affect not the vitality of the living human being but rather the pro-

[1] Of course these technological operations which require extremely scarce skills and resources almost always require decisions with moral overtones as to whether they should be undertaken and on whom among the possible beneficiaries. And this does place a responsibility for a moral decision on a physician or surgeon, just as the choice of men to be sent out on a dangerous patrol involves an officer in a moral choice as to whose life should be preserved and whose should be endangered or destroyed. The affirmation of the sanctity of life as such does not remove moral dilemmas given by the diversity of the forms of life, the existence of other values and the ineluctible fact of scarcity.

[2] The development of experimental techniques in medical research raises grave issues. Medical research workers sometimes proceed in disregard of these issues but within the medical profession itself there is serious scrutiny and criticism of this disregard. Much information and deep reflection on the whole problem are to be found in the writings of Dr. Henry Beecher of the Massachusetts General Hospital.

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cess of procreation and the continuity of the lineage.

AID does, and artificial inovulation and genetic engineering would, intrude into and disrupt the lineage; they provide a "descendant" who is not in a direct genetic line with his ancestors. Of course there have always been variant forms of adoption which introduced a genetically alien element into the lineage, but they have been marginal or superficial in the depth of their entry into the process. The new or prospective forms of intervention penetrate into the centre of the process and they therewith affront the primordial sentiment of the sacredness of the stream of life passed down through membership in a common physiological substance. They create a human being who lacks the genetic continuity with the line of descent of those who take him (or her) as a child.[3]

The genetic manipulator or the artificial inseminator or inovulator is not a member of the lineage; like the organism he helps into existence he too stands outside the stream of primordial continuity. His motives might be sacrilegious; they might with equal likelihood be benevolent or he might be profoundly neutral, concerned only with the efficient performance of an assigned and accepted task. But unless it becomes possible to produce a foetus and bring it to human life outside a human uterus, the process cannot be carried out without the consent of the woman who is to bear the child. The situation is therefore identical in this respect to the situation which obtains traditionally between patient and physician. The physician does not do what the patient does not agree to allow him to do.[4] It is true that the sanctity of the lineage, which is derivative from the sanctity of life, is infringed by these procedures.

YET I DO NOT THINK that the matter must be taken tragically. Like religious sensitivity, the sense of the sacredness of lineage is unevenly distributed among human beings. Most human beings possess it: some to a very high degree and others possess it only slightly. Some persons even react against it violently. There are certainly numerous parents who do not care about their children. There are numerous children who do not care about their parents. There are numerous human beings who do not care about their ancestry. For them, what to many of us appears to be an act of impiety is utterly neutral. Within rather wide limits, we accept that impiety as permissible, even though it is not admirable. There is no reason why such persons should not be permitted to act on the basis of this "lineage-neutrality."

One of the great developments of modern society, and one which many people think—quite rightly—represents a tremendous step forward in human progress, has been the diminution in the weight attributed to lineage as a criterion by which to estimate the value of a human being. The decline in aristocracy and the shrinkage of the realm and power of hereditary monarchy are expressions of the decline of the importance attributed to lineage. The heightened appreciation of individuality, the enhanced evaluation of individual achievement, the growth of civility—the high evaluation of the *individual's* membership in the civil community and of his rights as an individual which come from living under a common authority in a contiguous and bounded territory, the idea of the "career open to talents" and of the corresponding principle of equality of individual opportunity—all attest to the attenuation of "lineage-consciousness" in the advanced societies of modern times. We are living in an epoch in which the centre of gravity of the sanctity of life has been displaced from the sanctity of the lineage of genetically linked individual lives to the individuality of discrete human organisms. I do not think that we can have it both ways, and of the two I myself value more highly the emphasis which has become predominant in the modern age.

Furthermore I doubt whether any artificial inovulation will be practised on a large scale. It seems very unlikely that the sense of the sanctity of lineage will die out to such an extent that very large numbers of men and women would wish to resort to contrived intervention to provide them with offspring. But there will

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[3] It is impossible for me to say whether this lack of a sense of genetic continuity with "parents" would result in damage to the individuals who would be or are created by this process. The attitudes of adopted children to the discovery of the fact that their "parents" are not really their parents should be studied. But even if it were found that the discovery that foster parents are not real parents has a traumatic affect, that still might not outweigh the advantages of adoption, in view of the available alternatives.

[4] The problem is somewhat complicated by whether the husband knows and consents to the artificial insemination or inovulation. But whatever the laws of adultery, they take a stand on problems of identical character.

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surely be some who, like those who adopt children, will be willing to have children who are not of their own genetic line. Hence, once it becomes possible, it will surely occur. If it is to occur, it is most important that it should be done under morally legitimate auspices, for good reasons and with the agreement of the "parents" who agree *irrevocably* to treat the product as their own legitimate offspring with full rights as such and with the fullest protection of the law.

THE SAME MAY BE SAID of "genetic engineering," if and when that becomes possible. If mature adults, who wish to reduce the probability of the occurrence of clearly hereditary physical and mental defects in their offspring and descendants, seek the aid of a "genetic engineer" to attain this end, I see no more objection to it than I see to the recourse of afflicted persons to the more conventional types of medical therapy. Their respect for the past of their lineage should be balanced by a concern for its future and for the vital quality of the individual members of its temporal extension.

Once more we see that the sanctity of human life is an equivocal criterion. The value which it prizes takes a variety of forms, not all of which are in all ways harmonious with each other. But where it unambiguously affirms the vitality and individuality of the living, and the persistence of a lineage into the future, "genetic engineering" seems to me to be quite acceptable.

Observance of the sacredness of the lineage is not to be coercively imposed any more than observance of the ritual of any particular religion. If there are persons whose feelings about the sacredness of the lineage are not intense, and they have good reasons such as concern for the health of their prospective offspring, there are no grounds for denying them the right to discontinue certain components of their genetic line. "Negative eugenics" which involves forbearance to many where the union would bring forth with high probability organically impaired offspring is surely compatible with an appreciation of the sanctity of life. It is even required by that appreciation. The same may be said of "genetic engineering." "Genetic engineering" will probably not even involve a complete break in the line.

After all it is not illegal, even if it is not "natural," to remain celibate and to bring one's lineage to extinction. There should, correspondingly, be no legal or moral grounds for denying such persons the right to disaffiliate their offspring, partially or wholly, from their lineage. As in regular medical and surgical practice, the protection of morally legitimate auspices, good reasons, and a completely voluntary decision on the part of the persons immediately involved must be observed.

As regards the sanctity of life itself, the biological-technological innovations we have been considering do not diminish life. They improve it. They do not constrict it, rather they enlarge it as far as individual human beings are concerned. It is certainly true that they would intervene, prospectively, at points where it was —and still is—impossible to intervene. But except for the disruption of lineage, they do nothing other than increase and enlarge the vitality of oncoming generations.

CONCEIVABLY THEY COULD do worse. They might produce a new species of monsters, less intelligent and more destructive than the present species. They might engender a species more sickly, more subject to ailments of every kind, unviable and unworthy. There is fear that they might, but I do not regard this fear as well-founded. Pharmacists could poison the human race; conspiracies of physicians and pharmacists could, even with their present technology, do extraordinary harm to humanity. Surgeons could do the same. At present they do not, and do not intend to do so. Why do they not exploit their present powers? The answer seems almost self-evident. They stand in reverence of life. They are horrified by the possibility of destruction: or they would be horrified if they thought of the possibilities. Of course there could be the "mad physicians" whom science-fiction brings before us, and there have been the wicked and sadistic physicians who conducted "experiments" in the Nazi concentration camps. There is, however, no reason to expect these cases to become uncontrollably frequent as long as a civil society endures, as long as the civil authorities are reasonably humane and alert, and as long as the present ethical traditions of the medical and scientific professions endure.

It is possible, of course, that greater potentialities for evil in the future will prove more tempting than the present more limited potentialities. It is also possible that medical education, because of the greatly increased numbers with which it will have to deal in the future, will be less successful than it is at present in

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training into the new members of the profession that ethos which at present sustains the general appreciation of the sanctity of life.

What about the possibility of certain medically unqualified scientists evading the controls which might be quite effective in the medical profession itself? On this point I see no reason why the law should not be able to proceed against these persons as it proceeds at present against those who practise medicine without the necessary qualifications, or who, having the qualifications, behave in a clearly unethical and professionally pernicious manner.

THUS FAR we have discussed the prolongation or "creation" of life. But what about its annihilation through abortion and euthanasia? Are such actions morally permissible from a standpoint which regards life as sacred? I have little doubt about the former, considerable doubt about the latter.

My reasons are as follows. The postulate of the sanctity of life refers to three forms of life: (*1*) the life of the lineage; (*2*) the life of the human organism; and (*3*) the life of the individual human being, as the individuality constituted by self-consciousness, as a discrete entity possessing self-consciousness, and the capacity for psychic "self-locomotion" (*i.e.* capacity for perception, the amalgamation and ordering of perceptions, memory, intentions and choice).

A foetus, for most of the period of gestation, does not qualify for the sanctity which is attributed to life. It is still organically part of the mother; it has still not begun to learn, and by virtue of that it has not yet begun on the path to individuality. It is not yet an individual life —it is part of the life of the mother. It is not, it is true, a part in the same way as a limb or an internal organ are parts of a living human organism, but it also is not yet a discrete separate human organism beginning to remember, to discriminate, to intend. An infant is on the path to the development of individuality, which is more than biological uniqueness. A foetus is at a much earlier stage on the path on which actual birth is the decisive turning.

There are many good reasons to regret abortion or the necessity for it—effective contraception would be much more satisfactory—but I think that for our purposes it should be said that the principle of the sanctity of life of the individual as an individual, or the life of the lineage as the lineage of separate organisms, is not infringed or affronted by abortion in the earlier stages of pregnancy.

When we come to euthanasia of monsters or extreme idiots, the matter seems to me to be much more difficult because in the first place we are dealing with separate discrete human organisms which might possess some modicum of individuality. If we affirm the principle of the sanctity of life, euthanasia in marginal, and even in the extreme cases of idiocy or monstrosity, is repugnant. I am reluctant to see it embodied in laws which authorise it but would have much sympathy for a flexible attitude in the courts.

At the other end of the life span, where there is a certainly dying person in great pain, with not even the slightest probability of recovery, and where individuality has ceased totally to exist, euthanasia is again repugnant. It might, however, be morally permissible. In some respects the fact of scarcity of medical resources permits a solution which approximates, but is not identical with, euthanasia, namely suspension of effort to keep the organism alive. The argument against the authorisation of euthanasia seems to me to rest less in the nature of the action itself and more in the deficiencies of our knowledge in assessing the absence or cessation of individuality—itself so ambiguous as to defy clear definition—and in our distrust of the wisdom and generosity of men.

THE SANCTITY of individuality is a variant form of the sanctity of life. The ambiguities of the ideas of individuality and "normality" or "naturalness" hamper our judgment when we consider another form of "contrived intervention" and when we attempt to do justice to the abhorrence which many persons experience when confronted with certain developments in psychiatric, neuro-surgical and psychological technology.

At the same time, the aversion against the taking of narcotics, the administration of hallucinogenic drugs, the use of devices for stimulating subliminal perception, and for secretly observing and recording occurrences in the private sphere, seems to me an aversion against the infringement on individuality. It arises from an anxiety lest the individual be made into something other than he "is." It is a fear that the particularly individuated and differentiated current of life which exists in the individual human organism will be tampered with,

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damaged, or extinguished. It is not that the individuality of particular individual human beings is always taken as given and final, and is not regarded as subject to certain legitimate, although not always effective, modes of influence. The guidance and formation of character through education and domestic discipline, the depressive and stunting effects of poverty and maltreatment, and the transformation of sensibility and mental powers through alcohol and sedative drugs are all widely, although unequally, accepted. The stimulation of the imagination through literature and drama are accepted but not the pharmacological stimulation of the imagination; the deadening of impulse through poverty and loneliness are also accepted—although decreasingly so—but not the deadening of sensibility through narcotics. The heightening of the power of the senses of vision, touch, taste, through training are accepted but not their heightening through drugs.

Some of these acceptances are functions of the compellingness of the inevitable or at least of the apparently unchangeable. Some of the acceptance is also a function of insensitivity, of an insufficient sympathy with the state of mind of others. But it is also a function of a conception of "normality." It is the product of a metaphysical belief in a pre-established and inviolable pattern of individuality which may co-exist with certain externally introduced influences but not with others. Those with which co-existence is not possible are the deliberate ones, those which are contrived and which do not arise from the course of "normal" interaction. It is the elements of deliberation and cognition beyond a "normal" range which renders abhorrent the administration of drugs to the self or the manipulation of conduct by experimental means not understood by the participant-subject of the experiment.

THE CONCEPT OF "NORMALITY" presupposes an "essential form" in which individuality exists. Slow and imperceptible processes of change or influence are not regarded as repugnant to this conception of normality because they are not seen as "abnormal" or "unnatural" and because they do not obviously impinge on individuality. Changing oneself deliberately by the exertion of internal moral resources, or by the adduction of certain external allegedly "sacred" influences of moral and religious guidance, is all right. The anonymous influence of one's class on one's moral and cultural attitudes is also regarded as all right; religious conversion is all right. They are regarded as all right because they take place in a medium of an "essential form" of human interaction, in friendship, in work, in worship, etc., which is taken as given. Much of the content of this "essential form" may be accounted for by the statistical frequency and consequent conventional normativeness of the practices in question. But the frequency and conventionality might themselves be to some extent a function of their possession of the property of "essential form." They occur frequently because they are thought to be "normal." This "essential form" or "normality" is very vaguely conceived and it permits a fairly wide range of acceptable variation.

But one of the things it excludes is the absolutely complete dominion of one human being over another human being. And by complete dominion is meant the loss or renunciation of all individual autonomy by the dominated person. Autonomy, thus understood, is what the individual would be if left alone to the extent that he is by his kinship group, his working colleagues, his neighbours, and his rulers. There is often not much of him left over after this, but what is left over is his temperament and his memory of his own individual past. When these are taken away from him by "contrived intervention," or even by his co-operation, other persons who do not participate in the complete dominion experience a sensation of abhorrence.

UNDER what conditions is the modification of temperament and individuality by "contrived intervention" permissible?

It is certainly not permissible as a satisfaction of the curiosity of psychologists who wish to see how far the personality is modifiable by pharmaceutical or neuro-surgical means. It is obviously not permissible for political purposes such as the maintenance of public order or for the protection of the unchallenged dominion of the rulers of society or any particular organisation within society. Is it permissible for therapeutic ends? I see no argument against this as long as the usual safeguards practised by the medical profession are observed, *i.e.*, as long as the informed consent of the patient, or of his kinsmen who are morally responsible for him, is given. Where an individual has already lost such individuality as he once possessed, and where the therapeutic technique offers a reasonable probability of the restoration to him of some parts

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of his previous individuality, it seems to me to be morally unexceptionable.

The protection which the sanctity of individuality must possess depends in part on the strength of the ethics of the medical profession and on the formation of a comparable ethical outlook among psychologists, social workers, and related professions. It thus depends on the moral vigilance and responsibility of the universities, and particularly of those who are in charge of training in medicine, psychology, and social work. It depends also on the vigilance of legislators and the courts in the implementation of strict prohibition on attempts to modify individuality by persons without adequate professional qualifications. It depends thus on public opinion.

THIS BRIEF EXAMINATION of the range and limits of what is permissible in "contrived intervention" brings us back to where we began. Without a widespread affirmation of the sanctity of life, and of the variant forms of the sanctity of life such as the sanctity of individuality, as a basic and guiding principle of social life, we will be hopelessly adrift. The crisis is not yet fully upon us because the techniques of "contrived intervention" are not yet as elaborate or as secure as they are likely to be in the future. When they do develop more fully and effectively, the temptations to exploit the powers which they will offer to those in whom the sense of the sanctity of human life and of human individuality is weak or perverted will be strong —undoubtedly stronger than they are now.

The situation will surely not be made easier by the ambiguity and the inherent tensions and contradictions of the idea of the sanctity of life. By its very structure this fundamental moral principle cannot provide an absolutely unambiguous guide which will indicate infallibly what is permissible and what is not permissible in any particular case. Nonetheless, it is the only ultimate foundation for the protection against sadism in its more crude and brutal forms or in the more refined form of "scientific curiosity."

For those who accept the traditional Christian view of man and accept its theological postulates, there is no difficulty in the way of their affirmation of the sanctity of life, although its application will of course often present them with dilemmas which are inherent in the idea itself. For those who no longer accept the traditional Christian view, the acceptance of the idea of the sanctity of life might well encounter intellectual obstacles. I myself find no such obstacles, and I do not think that there are any such in the conception of sanctity which I have put forward here.

From my point of view, the task of our generation and those immediately following is not so much the re-establishment of a Christianity which is shorn of its historical and mythological accretions. Rather it is the rediscovery of what it was that for so long gave such persuasive power to Christianity. This powerful impulse became, in our culture, so intimately fused with Christian doctrine and belief that when, as has happened in the past one hundred and fifty years, Christianity has become in varying degrees unacceptable, the prior and impelling belief in the sanctity of man's life and personality also seemed to lose its acceptability. But the powerful impulse still remains and that is why the proto-religion, the "natural metaphysic" of the sanctity of life, must be intellectually rehabilitated and rendered acceptable.

An Examination

The doctor demonstrated on my shins
that I was born into a time of famine
Germany nineteen twenty-three I said
not parentage but history determines
the substances from which our selves are made
beneath the jargon of my seven skins
my Jewish skeleton is branded German

Karen Gershon

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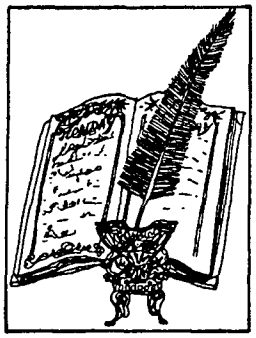

Column

FROM TIME TO TIME the normally sluggish, even stagnant waters of the British way of life are strangely stirred. Bubbles of marsh gas rise to the surface, distend and burst; then the waters close again and all is as before, unless perhaps for a faintly unpleasant smell.

Such incidents have their value because often they throw a curious light on the way in which British institutions work, though perhaps this is not much to gain at the cost of making a few people's lives utterly wretched. Surely no one today can think of the vast expenditure of moral indignation provoked by the Profumo case without feeling slightly ashamed, either for themselves or for others; surely also, if there was anything to be learned from the Denning Report, it was by what devious and obscure ways a private peccadillo can be translated into a public transgression.

The remarkable feature of what we like to think of as scandals in public life is that very often there is nothing at all behind them which any sensible man would think worthy of a moment's consideration; we are past masters of the art of making smoke without fire. We do not go in for scandals like the Dreyfus affair or the assassination of Ben Barka, in which great public issues are involved, the honour and integrity of the state are at stake, and men are prepared for great personal sacrifices in order that the truth may be revealed; or if we do, we take care not to expose them. What we enjoy is an occasional rush of blood to the head about trivialities, like female elephants who are said to derive delicious sensations from being frightened about nothing. Perhaps that is why the mysteries of our ramshackle constitution, so often held up for admiration, often seem designed for nothing so well as making mountains out of molehills.

There could be no better illustration of this particular aspect of the British way of life than the Great Affair at the Tate, of which Sir John Rothenstein gives a fascinating account in the second volume of his autobiography, *Brave Day Hideous Night*. There are other good things in Sir John's autobiography, which will in any case remain an indispensable source for anyone interested in popular taste in the arts in Britain. But nothing in it can quite equal the account of the Great Affair. It is almost as if for a moment Rothenstein had developed all the qualities of a major novelist, in particular that of presenting to us the character of a scoundrel, improbably named LeRoux Smith LeRoux, on a scale which even Balzac would have admired. Indeed the Great Affair has other features of the best novels; a continuous series of bizarre and improbable incidents that are yet unmistakably rooted in reality, and also the power of exasperating one with the claims to virtue of the hero almost as much as it lays one under the spell of the villain.

It is one of the ironies of the story that the Great Affair developed out of an error of judgment on Rothenstein's part. In 1936 he had been appointed Director of the Tate Gallery, then in a condition of almost total decrepitude; during the war, disaster again fell upon the Tate, which suffered more from the effects of enemy bombing than any other British gallery. Nevertheless, over the years, Rothenstein transformed the Tate into a genuinely creative element in the artistic life of Britain, and after the war its growing prestige at home and abroad, and the wide public interest, enlivened by controversy, created both by its permanent collection and the frequent exhibitions organised by Rothenstein, were something of which any gallery director might feel proud.

IN THE FATAL YEAR of 1952, however, Rothenstein visited South Africa and there, like many others later, fell a victim to the charms and prepossessing ways of LeRoux Smith LeRoux, then Curator of the Pretoria Art Centre. They became friends; it was natural that when LeRoux, by his own account, was driven out of South Africa because of his views on *apartheid*, Rothenstein should have secured him a temporary appointment at the Tate; he thought that LeRoux's administrative experience might be valuable to him at an institution as chronically understaffed as the Tate was.

In this, as it proved, he was mistaken. LeRoux was both a scoundrel and a psychopath; installed at the Tate, he took little interest in the day-to-day administration of the gallery, surrounded his own activities with an impenetrable veil of secrecy, used every opportunity to provoke ill-will and dissension among the staff, and engaged in a meticulous examination of the gallery's files with a view to discovering evidence with which to discredit Rothenstein. In the meanwhile, Rothenstein was enjoying what he describes as the happiest years of his life.

They were soon cut short. At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Tate, LeRoux read out a personal statement which was a

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violent attack on Rothenstein's administration of the gallery, accusing him of making his colleagues' lives intolerable, and insinuating that he had been guilty of gross extravagance, not untainted by corruption, in purchasing, for £9,000, Degas' marvellous little bronze of *La Petite Danseuse*. To these charges were later added others, in particular that of misapplying funds.

Rothenstein was dumbfounded. This was a man whom he had befriended and helped, in whom he trusted and, somewhat inexplicably, continued to trust. But he was even more dumbfounded by the reactions of the Trustees, men with whom, as he thought, he had worked for years in amity and confidence, who knew him well, and with whom he had never had any serious cause for disagreement. To his bewilderment, they did not dismiss LeRoux's statement as a psychotic manifestation which ought not to be taken seriously unless proved up to the hilt, but rather as a serious case which it was up to Rothenstein to answer.

The Chairman of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery at that moment was the ex-Lord Chancellor of England, Lord Jowitt. He had few, if any, qualifications for the position; why then should he have become Chairman of the Trustees? The answer seems to be quite simply that, the Labour government having been defeated, the Lord Chancellor was out of work. He wrote to Rothenstein that "as he would have time on his hands which he would like to devote to the fostering of the arts he would find fruitful compensation for loss of office in the Chairmanship of the Tate." Everyone, including Rothenstein, seems to have taken it for granted that Jowitt's desire for the job was a perfectly sufficient reason why he should have it.

Rothenstein at least was to suffer as a result. Jowitt seems to have regarded LeRoux's statement of charges against him as an advocate regards a brief; that is to say, as a case to be argued, and LeRoux continued to feed him and the Trustees with material. It was regarded as a particularly grave scandal that Rothenstein had permitted a film company to photograph Miss Zsa Zsa Gabor in the gallery, her skirt withdrawn slightly above knee level as she posed with her foot on the base of a statue by McWilliam. LeRoux despatched marked copies of the photograph to the Trustees, both Houses of Parliament and leading figures in the art world. Viscountess Davidson asked a question in the House of Commons.

It was not only Jowitt who helped the Great Affair along. Some of the Trustees also did their bit. The Tate disposed of ludicrously inadequate funds; it was always understaffed; but in compensation it rejoiced in a constitutional position of quite marvellous complexity, designed with almost fiendish ingenuity to fragment responsibility between the Director, the Trustees of the Tate, the Trustees of the National Gallery (of which the Tate was technically an administrative offshoot), the Royal Academy and the Treasury. Such a system was workable only if the Director and the Trustees worked in mutual trust and confidence. Under LeRoux's malign influence, it completely broke down, and some of the Trustees, for often conflicting reasons, eagerly seized upon the opportunity both to attack the Director and to advertise the conflict that had broken out within the Gallery. In particular, among the artists who were Trustees, Graham Sutherland embraced LeRoux's cause with enthusiasm and finally resigned as a public protest against what he held to be Rothenstein's maladministration of the gallery.

SUTHERLAND HAD AN equally enthusiastic and even more belligerent ally outside the Tate in the art critic, connoisseur and collector, Douglas Cooper, who organised an intensive war of nerves against Rothenstein. Cooper opened his campaign with a postcard to Rothenstein anticipating his impending removal from the Tate to jail; another announced his intention of hounding Rothenstein out of Millbank. Cooper enlisted the Press and anyone else who would listen to him in the cause; *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Sunday Express*, the *Evening Standard* and other papers all began to show an unusual interest in the affairs of the Tate. Kingsley Martin contributed a severely critical article in the *New Statesman*. Behind his iron curtain at Millbank, LeRoux maintained constant telephone communication with the *Evening Standard*, delivering minute-by-minute situation reports on every development in the Great Affair which could be construed to the discredit of Rothenstein. By now pandemonium ruled, and it is not surprising that Rothenstein, who as a civil servant was debarred from defending himself and was gravely warned by the Trustees against doing so, should over and over again feel himself driven to the point of resignation. Fortunately, he did not; in the conditions prevailing in the gallery, there is no knowing what folly might have followed. He did, however, find much-needed support at the Treasury, whose officials, cool, cynical, and unconcerned with the purely aesthetic controversies which underlay much of the criticisms of Rothenstein, satisfied themselves that there was nothing in the facts discreditable to Rothenstein and thereafter continued to assure him that the Great Affair was all a fuss about nothing. This was of course no

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great comfort to a man who was being publicly pilloried; and even the Treasury mind seemed to suffer a sea change when transferred into the hot-house atmosphere of the Tate. Dennis Proctor, a distinguished Treasury official, was essentially a humane, sensible and enlightened man, but even his judgment seems to have been affected by the Great Affair, when he succeeded Jowitt as Chairman of the Tate Trustees. "If you *will* make an enemy of Douglas Cooper," he said angrily to Rothenstein, "what can you expect."

BUT IN THE END the Treasury proved to be correct, and by 1954 the Great Affair was over. A number of events contributed to its end. One was the bizarre scene at the opening of the Diaghilev exhibition at Forbes House, when Rothenstein, finally provoked beyond endurance by Cooper, who pursued him from room to room shouting abuse, turned at bay, struck out at him and had the satisfaction of seeing his persecutor on hands and knees on the floor, scrabbling for his spectacles. Rothenstein's action had something of the shock effect of Stavrogin's when he bit the Governor-General's nose, but in this case the shock was salutary. It immediately endeared him to the public and the Press, which irrationally concluded that there must be much to be said for the puny Rothenstein thus defying his tormentor. "That is how to deal with such people," said the Curator of Versailles who was standing by.

In 1954 also, the second reading of the National Gallery and Tate Gallery Act, which at last made the Tate Gallery responsible for its own affairs, brought some sense into its administrative and constitutional position. Moreover, the forces of reason had been strengthened by the appointment as Trustees of two men of eminently good sense and good taste who were able to treat the Great Affair with the ironic detachment it deserved. Several years later Lord Robbins described the Great Affair as "a case of collective madness," and indeed most of those concerned in it behaved as if they had been fed exclusively on a diet of ergot. But its sequel was as interesting and characteristic as the Affair itself. The reign of hysteria over, animosities were forgotten, people ceased to remember that they had once been scandalised by the exposure of Zsa Zsa Gabor's knee, a kind of formal treaty of peace was negotiated between Rothenstein and Douglas Cooper. LeRoux Smith LeRoux, having forestalled dismissal from the Tate by resignation, became artistic adviser to Lord Beaverbrook, whose *Evening Standard* had been so active in the Great Affair. It is somehow satisfactory to learn that, by Beaverbrook's own account, his Artistic Adviser swindled him out of £40,000. Later, LeRoux joined a firm of London art dealers and one night was found dead on the floor of a conservatory. Beaverbrook and Rothenstein became firm friends. In a recent number of the *New Statesman*, Kingsley Martin has expressed his regrets for his unjustified attack on Rothenstein and for the pain it caused to him and his family.

So THE GREAT AFFAIR came to an end. I do not know what moral, if any, is to be drawn from the story, but it is quite fascinating enough without one. But one is perhaps justified in suspecting that, amid all the multifarious variety of institutions which go to make up the British establishment, the unreformed Tate Gallery of the Affair was not unique in having a constitution which made effective administration and rational policy almost impossible. And of course I shall never enter the gallery again without feeling that across the many marvels which hand on its walls lies the shadow of LeRoux Smith LeRoux.

★

"THE EXTERNAL VALUE of sterling shall conform to internal values as set by our domestic policies, and not the other way round. Secondly, we intend to retain control of our domestic rate of interest, so that we can keep it as low as suits our own purpose, without interference from the ebb and flow of international capital movements or flights of hot money. Thirdly, while we intend to prevent inflation at home, we will not accept deflation at the dictate of influences from outside. In other words, we abjure the instruments of bank rate and credit contraction operating through the increase of unemployment as a means of forcing our domestic economy into line with external factors."

This is not a quotation from Mr. Frank Cousins, though it might well be if Mr. Cousins could ever express himself so coherently. It is from a speech in the House of Lords, in May 1944, by John Maynard Keynes, defending the results of the Bretton Woods conference, including the establishment of the International Monetary Fund. There must be many in the Government, and among its advisers, all brought up as disciples of Keynes, who could not read these words today without a certain sense of shame, for the ideas and attitudes they imply are in every way the opposite of those on which the Government's policy is now based.

The sense of shame would not be confined to the Government and its advisers. *The Times'* Political Correspondent has recently written that the confusion of mind of Labour backbenchers could be summed up in one question: "What on earth happened to Keynes?" For it is

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true that the political programme on which Labour came to power was very largely inspired by an economic philosophy which originated from Keynes: its Bible was *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*. It is of course likely that very few Labour backbenchers, or indeed very few other people except professional economists, have ever read, much less understood, that difficult and abstruse classic; yet in the thirty years since it was written it has had a greater practical effect on the economic attitudes of Anglo-Saxon statesmen and politicians than any other work of economics since *The Wealth of Nations*, and nowhere has the effect been greater than in the British Labour Party.

Is it then the case that the Government, and the Labour Party, have now flung Keynes to the winds and that, in the advanced economic thought of today, Keynes has been superseded by Callaghan, with his eternal Micawber verity that a country in the red is necessarily ruined? It is of course true that the economic situation today is very different from the one with which Keynes was concerned in the *General Theory*; yet I for one find it difficult to believe that the answer to it is to be found in abandoning everything which Keynes preached, on moral and social as well as economic grounds, in favour of economic principles which Montagu Norman would have had no difficulty in applauding.

Most of all I find it difficult to believe that, faced with the present economic situation, Keynes would not have shown that flexibility and originality in applying abstract analysis to concrete economic facts which is so evident in the *General Theory* and which is so conspicuously lacking in everything which Mr. Wilson, Mr. Callaghan, and Mr. Stewart have to tell us. "Am I so faithless, so forgetful, so senile," cried Keynes at the end of his speech, "that at the very moment of the triumph of these ideas when, with gathering momentum governments, parliaments, banks, the press, the public and even economists have at last accepted the new doctrines, I go off to forge new chains to hold us fast in the old dungeons? I trust, my Lords, you will not believe it. . . ."

New chains for old dungeons. I am not surprised that *The Times'* Political Correspondent should feel a certain chill on the Labour benches as the ghost of Maynard Keynes walks through the lobbies.

R

Blood-Count

A falling mulberry stained this page
As it might have been under the gold barrel
Of a microscope the eosin-stained précis
Of a war fought in the long blue canals
Of the human heart, red corps against the white:
Dominion of one or other love disproving.
Meanwhile upon the outer rind there is
No sickness in the heart of time,
The fruit breathes on the tree and gestures,
The bark fresh, the leafage of hands dewy
Drives the beautiful wand of your flesh
Upwards into another spring, sap rising.

Lawrence Durrell

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Assessing H. G. Wells

By David Lodge

THE CENTENARY of the birth of H. G. Wells found the literary and intellectual world still divided and perplexed as to how to assess his importance. He is not, of course, in any sense a "fashionable" figure. He was never in fashion, perhaps, after the 1914–1918 War. One of the many ironies of his career was that the Armageddon which he foreshadowed in such fantasies as *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *The War in the Air* (1908) caused a radical shift in sensibility to which he was not able to attune himself. Wells, who could be an acute critic of himself, was quick to appreciate the fact. "My boom is over," he said to Arnold Bennett in 1917. "I've had my boom. I'm yesterday."

The trouble was, he had then another thirty-nine years to live, and none passed without at least one book from Wells. These were not all failures by any means—*The Outline of History* was an international best-seller—but he no longer influenced the readers and writers who mattered. Virginia Woolf's well-known essay "Modern Fiction" (1919) and D. H. Lawrence's review of *The World of William Clissold* (1926) in the *Calendar of Modern Letters* marked his rejection by the literary *avant-garde* of the 'twenties. Orwell's references to Wells in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) and Christopher Caudwell's chapter in *Studies in a Dying Culture* (1938), show that his kind of Utopian radicalism evoked no responsive chords in the 'thirties. As he grew older he was something of an embarrassment on the literary scene: a writer who had long outlived his creative life, but obstinately went on writing.

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It was Wells' painful experience to see the title of one of his books, *The War That Will End War* (1914) become the ironic catch-phrase of a whole generation's disillusionment, and the adjective formed from his name become synonymous with facile and materialistic optimism. As recently as 1962, Dr. Leavis evidently felt it was sufficient to discredit Sir Charles Snow's idea of a scientific culture by dubbing it "Wellsian." Wells' last published work, *Mind at the End of its Tether* (1945) was far from Wellsian. But that short, bitterly pessimistic pamphlet was generally taken as a confession, expressed with an extravagance that was attributed to his ailing mind and body, that his life's work and thought had been misdirected. At his death in 1946, Wells was a discredited thinker; as a novelist he was allowed the doubtful honour of having fathered "science fiction," but was remembered chiefly as the creator of engaging but light-weight sub-Dickensian comedies of lower middle-class manners.

IN RECENT YEARS, however, there has been something of a revival of interest in and respect for Wells. Two main tendencies are discernible, which are to some extent mutually opposed: on the one hand, a redefinition of Wells' imaginative identity and achievement in terms more congenial to the modern literary mind; and on the other hand, an attempt to do justice to his role as a "thinker" and transmitter of important political, social and scientific ideas in the 20th century.

The first of these attempts at redefinition started, perhaps, with Anthony West's thoughtful essay, "H. G. Wells," published in ENCOUNTER in 1957. West suggested that the pessimism of his father's last years was not a repudiation of everything he had stood for, but a reversion to

> his original profoundly-felt beliefs about the realities of the human situation. He was by

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> nature a pessimist, and he was doing violence to his intuitions and his rational perceptions alike when he asserted in his middle period that mankind could make a better world for itself by an effort of will.

West documented his theory particularly by reference to the early scientific romances, such as *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896), and *The First Men in the Moon* (1901) which, as he pointed out, draw the gloomiest conclusions about the likely results of the scientific and technological progress for which Wells was later to become such an enthusiastic propagandist. In *The Early H. G. Wells* (1961) Bernard Bergonzi came to the same conclusion, and also made a persuasive case for a high literary estimate of the early scientific romances. Skilfully applying the techniques of modern criticism, Bergonzi interpreted these works as symbolic or mythopoeic explorations of such late Victorian preoccupations as evolution and the class war, written with a powerful imaginative energy, and owing more to the literary atmosphere of the Decadence than to Wells' education at the Normal School of Science.

Ironically enough, in the very same year that part, at least, of Wells' *oeuvre* was thus triumphantly reclaimed by academic criticism, the American historian W. Warren Wagar was declaring:

> The heyday of the symbol-mongers and the literary technicians cannot last much longer; it is time again for Wells.

By which he meant Wells the journalist, the prophet, the tireless worker for a World State, too urgently concerned to save the world from destruction to take care over the form of his books. Mr. Wagar's *H. G. Wells and the World State* might have been called *All for Man; or Parnassus Well Lost*. It is a useful and intelligent guide to Wells' ideas and their roots in intellectual history, even if it does not always sound convinced of its own case.

The interest of Wells' position in the English world of letters at the turn of the century has been highlighted recently by the splendidly edited volumes of correspondence emanating from the Wells archives at the University of Illinois: *Henry James and H. G. Wells* (1958), *Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells* (1960) and *George Gissing and H. G. Wells* (1961). The General Editor of the Wells papers, Professor Gordon N. Ray, is working on a definitive biography. Meanwhile the centenary year was marked by the publication in Britain of three more books by or about Wells: a new edition of his *Experiment in Autobiography*,[1] *H. G. Wells: Journalism and Prophecy 1893–1946*, an anthology compiled by W. Warren Wagar,[2] and *The Life and Thought of H. G. Wells* by a Soviet scholar, J. Kagarlitski.[3]

MR. KAGARLITSKI'S book is not without its incidental insights, but these insights are invariably destructive, pointing out the confusions and inconsistencies in Wells' thought, while the general tone of the book is one of vague reverence. Mr. Kagarlitski concludes by saying, "Now we have the right to call [Wells] a great writer," but there is little in the book to substantiate this claim. Not surprisingly, because although Mr. Kagarlitski is not a doctrinaire Marxist, he necessarily judges Wells within the framework of Marxian orthodoxy, and is thus prevented from endorsing either Bergonzi's Wells or Wagar's Wells. After describing *The Time Machine*'s picture of human decadence in the year 802701, Mr. Kagarlitski comments, "In spite of the obviously scientific basis for this judgment, the picture is, of course, quite false." In fact the basis of Wells' prophecy is not scientific at all, but intuitive and imaginative. Its power is a rhetorical power, its truth a literary truth; and to appreciate this power and this truth we must suspend our ideological preferences.

This is something Mr. Kagarlitski cannot do. "Progress cannot cease," he says, "for the properties of matter are inexhaustible and however long mankind exists, each milestone passed will simply lead to the next." Mr. Kagarlitski rightly points out that Wells adopts this very position in the later Utopian novel, *Men Like Gods* (1923). But the later, optimistic Wells is no more congenial to Mr. Kagarlitski than the early pessimistic Wells.

> Wells is unable to draw a picture of ideal communal life, for basically his Utopian ideas stem from a bourgeois outlook and are limited by the mediocre possibilities such an outlook can offer.

This echoes Marxist comment on Wells from Lenin onwards.

"What a bourgeois he is! He is a Philistine," exclaimed Lenin after their meeting in 1920. Wells never denied it. "Lenin was a sound observer," he wrote in the *Autobiography*. "I was middle-class,—'petty bourgeois' as the Marxists have it."

MR. WAGAR claims no great originality for Wells as a political thinker: "His was a middle-

[1] Re-issued by Gollancz and Cresset Press (1966), 70s. (2 vols., illus. by the author).
[2] Bodley Head, 42s.
[3] Tr. Moura Budberg (Sidgwick & Jackson, 35s).

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class socialism somewhere between the visions of Auguste Comte and the British Fabians." Rather, he sees Wells as a 20th-century *philosophe,* a journalist and populariser who ranged over a wide area of human knowledge, putting into general currency a host of revolutionary new ideas. He was "the most popular of the serious writers and the most serious of the popular." Mr. Wagar's anthology, drawn largely from Wells' occasional writings, provides a useful basis for attempting a non-literary assessment of his importance.

The first part of the anthology is mainly concerned with Wells as a commentator on social and political trends in his lifetime and as a prophet of long and short-term developments in human civilisation. The liveliest passages in the latter mode are from *Anticipations* (1902), the book which established Wells as an intellectual force to be reckoned with, but which West and Bergonzi see as marking the betrayal of his own imagination. In fact the book is far from infatuated with the technological developments it predicts. The undertone of glee derives more from the imputed destruction of the existing order than from faith in the new. It is the Decadent game of *épater les bourgeois* transposed into a scientific key.

Wells was undoubtedly an acute prophet, though often wrong in his dating. He did not anticipate the arrival of the aeroplane before 1950. He foretold the development of large-scale motor traffic, but he was over-optimistic in predicting that the segregation of traffic and pedestrians would start in the first decade of the 20th century. (With characteristic insight into the British character, however, he predicted that we would lag behind Germany and America in this respect.) He foretold the decentralisation of business, the growth of suburbia, the disappearance of servants and their replacement by labour-saving appliances. He predicted the development of aerial warfare, the obsolescence of the idea of "non-combatants" and, in a resonant phrase, "the imminence of unanticipated death" as characterising the experience of war in the future. In *The World Set Free* (1914) he prophesied the holocaust of atomic warfare.

As a commentator on politics, Wells often made major misjudgments but, never afraid of contradicting himself, he usually recovered his step and adopted a position which may be described as enlightened. Thus, he dismayed his friends of the pacifist Left by his vulgar and blood-thirsty jingoism at the outbreak of the First World War; but by 1916 he saw its likely outcome as "the exhaustion in varying degrees of all the combatants and the succumbing of the most exhausted." He was one of the first propagandists for a League of Nations and one of the first to see that it was emasculated at birth. He saw clearly the evil of the Versailles Treaty, but he continued to underestimate the power of Hitler's Germany even after he had, in 1938, adopted the Churchillian position about appeasement. But, writing in the summer of 1939, Wells did not indulge the hope he had expressed in 1914 that the impending war would provide the impetus for the creation of a new world order. "It will be another war for the alteration or preservation of frontiers," he prophesied gloomily. The Second World War must have seemed like history's sneer at everything Wells had hoped and worked for. Orwell rubbed it in, in his essay "Wells, Hitler and the World State" (1941):

> For Hitler's sake a great nation has been willing to overwork itself for six years and then to fight for two years more, whereas for the commonsense, essentially hedonistic world-view which Mr. Wells puts forward, hardly a human creature is willing to shed a pint of blood.

Wells is hardly unique among idealistic thinkers in this respect, but his failure to capture enthusiasm for his idea of a world state, humanity united under the aegis of an enlightened technocracy, deserves some scrutiny, for he invested most of the energies of his mature life in this effort. The second part of Mr. Wagar's anthology, "Portraits," reminds one of how eagerly Wells seized his opportunities to meet world leaders—opportunities probably unique for a writer in the 20th century. Wells had interviews with both Roosevelts and with Lenin and Stalin. It was flattering, no doubt, that both Theodore Roosevelt and Lenin discussed Wells' own work, but significant that they both confined themselves to *The Time Machine,* scarcely the most propitious text for settling the world's problems.

Recording the interview with Roosevelt, Wells referred deprecatingly to *The Time Machine* as "a little book of mine, an early book full of the deliberate pessimism of youth"; and, following Anthony West, we may suggest that part of the reason for Wells' failure as a propagandist for a new world order was that this role committed him to a denial of his own most powerful insights, and therefore of his most powerful rhetoric. His favourite Utopian image of man standing on the earth as on a footstool, and reaching out amid the stars, seems pale and sentimental against the Swiftian emblems of man's bestiality in *The Island of Dr. Moreau.*

"WELLS in effect preached a biological doctrine of original sin, which turned

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Christianity inside out but amounted to much the same thing," Mr. Wagar has acutely observed. The original sin was man's essential animality; the hope of redemption was man's intelligence, which would lead him to peaceful co-operation in the cause of progress. (For a short period, spanned by *God, the Invisible King* [1917] and *The Undying Fire* [1919], which he later recalled with embarrassment, Wells even tried to present this redemption in religious terms.) The theory of evolution itself gave no certain indication of man's future; his survival might be attributed to his innate adaptability or to a run of luck which could end at any moment. In 1939 Wells wrote:

> Either the human imagination and the human will to live, rises to the plain necessity of our case, and a renascent *Homo Sapiens* struggles on to a new, harder and happier world dominion, or he blunders down the slopes of failure through a series of unhappy phases, in the wake of all the monster reptiles and beasts that have lorded it over the earth before him, to his ultimate extinction.

Here the future is presented as a matter of choice; but from his youth Wells was haunted by the possibility that evolution did not permit of choice. In *The War of the Worlds,* for instance, humanity is shown helpless and panic-stricken before the invasion of creatures who had a start of several millennia on our race in the evolutionary process. Throughout the novel there is an insistent strain of zoological imagery and allusion through which the Martians' ruthless treatment of man is compared to man's treatment of the animal world: bison, dodos, ants, frogs, bees, rabbits, and even the infusoria in water. The effect is of the Lord of Nature getting his well-deserved come-uppance. Man survives the Martian invasion, but he is saved "after all man's devices had failed, by the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon the earth"—bacteria, to which the Martians are not immune.

It is not only in Wells' early work that an anti-humanist moral is drawn from the idea of evolution. Take, for example, *Mr. Blettsworthy on Rampole Island* (1928). I have read this on the recommendation of Mr. Kagarlitski, who sees it as redeeming Wells' generally poor performance as a novelist between the wars: "an integral, forceful, deep book, filled with civic passion, wit, bitterness, fantasy—in a word the kind of novel that, it had seemed, Wells had forgotten how to write." It is not quite as good as that, and not, I think, good for the reasons Mr. Kagarlitski gives. But it is certainly an interesting novel, and worth resurrecting.

It falls into three parts. In the first part the hero-narrator describes his upbringing under the bracing influence of a Broad Churchman who was able cheerfully to reconcile Evolution and Muscular Christianity. After serio-comic defeats in love and commerce, treated in a pale imitation of Wells' pre-war novels, the hero goes to sea, quarrels with his captain, and is abandoned on a storm-wrecked ship somewhere off the coast of South America. Delirious and half dead, he drifts to Rampole Island, where he lives on sufferance, regarded as a quasi-divine lunatic, with a tribe of cannibals. It is essentially the Gulliver situation again. The Islanders live squalid, degraded lives, prevented by various meaningless taboos from utilising the full resources of their habitat. In particular, they live in superstitious fear of the Megatheria, or giant sloths, that inhabit the Island. The narrator exploits his privileged position to try and rouse the Islanders to improve the quality of their lives, painting glowing but dishonest pictures of modern Western society. One of the savages tells him: "You are a dreamer.... The real world is about you here and now, the only real world. See it for what it is." In life on Rampole Island we see a kind of allegory of the real world: thus the war with a neighbouring tribe caricatures the military inefficiency and emotional hysteria of the Great War. In fact, in the third Book, it is revealed that Blettsworthy's life on Rampole Island has been not an allegory but a delirious distortion of the real world. He was rescued from the ship in a state of nervous collapse and taken back to New York for treatment, during which time the War has broken out. Restored to sanity, the hero returns to Europe and enlists, but his experiences at the Front suggest that Rampole Island was more of an idyll than a nightmare. " 'Rampole Island,' said I, 'was sanity to this.' "

Picking up a casual reference, towards the end of the novel, to the Sacco and Vanzetti trial, Mr. Kagarlitski sees it as a searing indictment "of a world in which such a trial could take place." The myth of Rampole Island, however, like the myth of *Lord of the Flies* (and Golding, despite the ironic epigraph from the *Outline of History* to *The Inheritors,* is very much a literary descendant of Wells) is memorable not for its topical allusiveness, but for its general implications about the nature of man. In this part of the novel Wells returns to pessimistic speculation about evolution, and in the treatment of the Megatheria he does so with the startling imaginative concreteness of his best early work. The repulsive sloths are described with tremendous verve:

> Its skin is a disagreeable pink, but mostly hidden by long coarse hairs that are almost quills, the

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> colour of old thatch and infested not only with a diverse creeping population, including the largest black ticks I have ever beheld, but with a slimy growth of greenish algae and lichens that form pendant masses over the flanks and tail. Over the rump and tail there is real soil; I have seen weeds, and even a little white flower, actually growing there.

The Megatheria have exterminated all other animal life on the Island, and they are gradually nibbling away its vegetation. They are immensely old and no longer procreate. For Blettsworthy they represent a daunting denial of optimistic theories of evolution:

> The struggle for life can terminate in the triumph of types unfit to live, types merely successfully most noxious.... So that far from Evolution being necessarily a strenuous upward progress to more and more life, it might become, it could and did evidently in this case become, a graceless drift towards a dead end.

Blettsworthy consoles himself with the thought that "Man... is not an animal, the analogy is false." He falls asleep dreaming of Utopia, only to be woken and ignominiously chased by one of the sloths.

Whenever Wells' imagination catches fire in this novel it leads him to a pessimistic vision of man and nature. Yet at the end of the book we are treated to a typically "Wellsian" upbeat sermon from an improbably reformed character who swindled the hero in Book One: "You do not know the mighty adventures that are close at hand for mankind.... Take my word for it—it is your Rampole Island that will pass away and I who will come true."

THE CONFLICT in Wells between optimism and pessimism is by no means unique: it is more or less the natural condition of the modern intellectual.

As Lionel Trilling has often observed, most of us lead double lives: liberal, humane, civic-minded citizens in practical matters, we nevertheless seem to prefer artists and thinkers who cry havoc on the civilisation we are constructing. It is a kind of inverted hypocrisy by which we pretend to be worse than we evidently are; and it provides a shaky position from which to accuse Wells of inconsistency and contradiction. After all, it might be argued, we are in no position to sneer at Wells' idea of a World State. The United Nations may not stir us to great enthusiasm, but it is our main hope for preserving peace in the world, and even General de Gaulle, one suspects, would not really wish to abolish it. The United Nations is, of course, a long way from Wells' World State, but it is a tottering step in that direction, and indirectly Wells contributed to its constitution by his part in the Sankey Declaration of Human Rights.

There is a temptation, then, to see Wells as a kind of hero of the spirit who tried to resolve the contradiction described above by deliberately suppressing his pessimistic intuitions and willing his imagination into more constructive channels, even at the expense of weakening its power. But this image of Wells isn't quite convincing, and it never quite convinced Wells himself. He is an almost unique example of a writer who, to use Stephen Spender's terminology,[4] started as a "modern" and turned himself into a "contemporary." In the process he lost his place in the literary Pantheon of our time. This would not matter, perhaps, if we could say confidently that he achieved anything substantial outside the sphere of literary creation. To be sure, he "influenced" the public mind—Orwell doubted whether "anyone who was writing books between 1900 and 1920... influenced the young so much"—but it was in a way peculiarly difficult to define and evaluate. Ultimately, perhaps, we can only measure such influence by its depth and duration or by its practical results. Wells' influence, if Orwell is representative, was short-lived in those who experienced it; and it is difficult to point to any aspect of our lives that has been affected specifically by Wells.

As, in the inter-war period, Wells applied his energies more and more to popularisation and propaganda, the failure of his ideas to take root became more evident. It would seem that in a complex, pluralist and specialised culture like ours, "to be the most popular of the serious writers and the most serious of the popular" is to forsake real seriousness and with it real influence. As Aldous Huxley pointed out (in *The Olive Tree*) Wells' audience was immense, but he failed to reach the right people. Considering that Wells' own plans for reforming the world, most explicitly developed in *The Open Conspiracy* (1928), were distinctly élitist, his failure to convert the élite of his own cultural community is all the more ironic.

Whatever influence Wells exerted on his age he was able to exert by virtue of his reputation as an imaginative writer, and his influence declined as that reputation declined. It seems to me that (*pace* Mr. Wagar) it is as an imaginative writer that he will be best remembered, and that any assessment of him must centre on his restless, ambivalent and inconclusive dealings with the art of fiction.

WELLS remarks in his *Autobiography*, "I find before me a considerable accumula-

[4] Stephen Spender, *The Struggle of the Modern* (1963).

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tion of material, first assembled together in a folder labelled, 'Whether I am a Novelist.'" It was a question that exercised many besides himself. It exercised Henry James, and in that same section of the *Autobiography*, entitled "Digression about Novels," Wells says: "I find myself worrying round various talks and discussions I had with Henry James a third of a century ago."

The relationship between James and Wells, as documented by Leon Edel and Gordon N. Ray,[5] is one of the most fascinating episodes in modern literary history.

But it was unfortunate that their debate came to its head at a time when Wells was not writing his best work. Few readers would now quarrel with James' strictures, in his 1914 essay "The Younger Generation," on *The New Machiavelli*, *The Passionate Friends* and *Marriage*; and later Wells himself was to concede their cogency. (Of *Marriage*, for instance, Wells says in the *Autobiography*, "Indisputably the writing is scamped in places. It could have been just as light and better done.") The point that Wells was arguing with Henry James, "that the novel of completely consistent characterisation arranged beautifully in a strong and rounded story, and painted deep and round" did not exhaust the possibilities of the form, was a valid one, but could have been better illustrated by an appeal to Wells' scientific romances, or to *Tono-Bungay*. There is little allusion to these works in the Wells-James correspondence, and by the time their debate came into the open Wells was following and seeking to justify a much less original kind of undertaking—the discussion-novel-of-ideas, which though he denied it, was a throwback to Victorian forms. (The best of these novels, *Boon* [1915], is an acknowledged imitation of Mallock's *The New Republic*.)

Wells' peculiar gift as a writer of fiction lay in his ability to invest speculations about changes in life and society in general with a startling and imaginatively persuasive concreteness. He is the most *descriptive* of writers. Description in Wells' fiction bears the weight of significance reserved, in conventional fiction, for individual human actions and individual consciousness. In stories like *The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds*, the narrator-heroes are deliberately and appropriately characterless: their function is to be reliable reporters of spectacular changes in the environment around them. "The Star" has no characters at all; it is all description, and description of a power and eloquence that makes nonsense of Wells' frequent disclaimers of a concern for the niceties of prose style.[6]

In fact, Wells was always attracted as well as repelled by the "aesthetic" approach to the writing of fiction. As a reviewer of novels for the *Saturday Review* in the late 'nineties, he applied strict standards of formal analysis, to the detriment of popular favourites of the period, such as Hall Caine and Marie Corelli, and to the advantage of such novelists as Stephen Crane, Conrad, Gissing, Hardy, Kipling, Meredith, George Moore and Turgenev.[7] Wells befriended several of these writers and engaged in discussions of the art of fiction with them. Reminiscing about this period of his life, Wells later liked to see himself as a barbarian, irked and rebellious in the company of the aesthetes. In 1930 he wrote pugnaciously:

> Save for an incidental lapse or so... I have never taken any great pains about writing. I am outside the hierarchy of conscious and deliberate writers altogether. I am the absolute antithesis of Mr. James Joyce.

Yet according to Arnold Bennett, Wells' "praise of *A Portrait of the Artist* had very considerable influence... he commanded me to read it and to admire it extremely." And there was to be a place for "the high mystery of the Novel, as it was understood by Henry James" in his plan for a World Encyclopaedia outlined in 1932 (and reprinted by Mr. Wagar).

To RETURN to Wells' earlier career, it is evident that he was competing with the better novelists of his time more keenly than he later liked to admit. His first conscious bid for literary distinction, over which he took great pains, was *Love and Mr. Lewisham* (1900), and his comments on this book at the time show a curious misjudgment of his own talent. To justify this attempt at a conventional realistic novel he felt obliged to belittle his scientific romances. Writing to Arnold Bennett, who had evidently made a different comparison, he said:

> I am doomed to write "scientific romances" and short stories for you creatures of the mob, and my novels must be my private dissipation.

[5] *Henry James and H. G. Wells: A Record of their Friendship, their Debate on the Art of Fiction, and their Quarrel* (1958).

[6] According to the Norwegian scholar Ingvald Raknem, this story is largely cribbed from a French work, *La Fin du Monde* (1893) by Camille Flammarion, but is much superior to it. As Wells follows the sequence of events in his source very closely, the superiority must lie in Wells' rhetoric. See I. Raknem, *H. G. Wells and his Critics* (1963), a formidably exhaustive compilation of obscure information and comment about Wells' fiction.

[7] For an account of Wells' reviewing at this period, see Gordon N. Ray, "H. G. Wells Tries to be a Novelist," *Edwardians and Late Victorians*, ed. Richard Ellmann (New York, 1960).

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Wells was not to enjoy the luxury of neglected merit for long, for *Love and Mr. Lewisham* led to *Kipps* (1905) and *The History of Mr. Polly* (1910), both resounding successes. *Mr. Polly* is indeed a highly entertaining novel, and within its limits a successful one; but taken together, the three novels suggest that the realistic novel of lower-middle-class manners was not really Wells' *métier*. (*Tono-Bungay* [1900], which is often grouped with these novels, is in fact a very different and much superior kind of work, as I have argued elsewhere:[8] a Condition of England novel in which Wells' peculiar strengths as a descriptive and speculative writer are given full play, and his limitations in the presentation of individual character and action scarcely felt.) It is impossible to accept Professor Ray's comparison of Wells' portrayal of Mr. Lewisham as a student at South Kensington with Joyce's portrayal of Stephen at University College, Dublin. The setting is observed realistically enough, but Wells interposes a thick wadding—half-patronising, half-sentimental—of authorial "manner" between us and Lewisham's experience, *e.g.*:

> Lewisham ingloriously headed the second class, and Miss Heydinger's name did not appear.... So the student pays for the finer emotions. And in the spacious solitude of the Museum gallery devoted to the Raphael cartoons sat Lewisham, plunged in gloomy meditation. A negligent hand pulled thoughtfully at the indisputable moustache, with particular attention to such portions as were long enough to gnaw.

When he attempts "realism," Wells falls back on Victorian mannerisms. Thus in *Kipps*, dialogue and indirect speech are littered with capitalised words and phrases with which the characters seek to articulate their *petit bourgeois* values and aspirations: "At first Kipps hesitated whether he should confide an equal desire for Benevolent activities or for further Depravity.... He rather affected the pose of the Good Intentioned Dog." The trick is a Dickensian one. But whereas Dickens' characters create or appropriate such phrases and invest them with an individual significance, Wells' characters seem to be groping hopelessly about in a heap of tawdry, second-hand diction for some feeble sense of identity. The effect is diminishing, and gives a curiously hollow note to the comedy—a note which finally asserts itself in the authorial outburst towards the conclusion of the novel—"The stupid little tragedies of these clipped and limited lives"—and thus makes nonsense of its "happy ending."

The History of Mr. Polly is a much more satisfactory novel, and it is worth noting that here Kipps' enslavement to capitalised cliché is replaced by Mr. Polly's garbled but creative literary idiom. Crying, "Whoa, my friskacious palfrey!" to an unstable windsor chair, Mr. Polly articulates his unskilled determination to embrace a richer kind of existence. He obtains it in the end, by committing arson and by waging unscrupulous war against the bully who threatens his enjoyment of the idyllic country pub. The problem of the frustrated *petit bourgeois* is at last resolved, but at the expense of endorsing an essentially anti-social hero. Perhaps this is why Wells wrote no more novels in the vein of *Mr. Polly*. If so, it may offer a clue to the apparently perverse twists and turns of Wells' literary career.

THAT career was, initially, a literary and social success-story of the first order. H. G. Wells, the son of a gardener and a lady's maid, never quite got over it. There is a revealing passage from the preface to a Russian edition of one of Wells' books in 1909, where he explains that a successful literary career in England is

> one of the modern forms of adventure.... One is lifted out of one's narrow circumstances into familiar and unrestrained intercourse with a great variety of people. One sees the world. One meets philosophers, scientific men, soldiers, artists, professional men, politicians of all sorts, the rich, the great, and one may make such use of them as one can. One finds oneself no longer reading in books and papers but hearing and touching at first hand the big discussions that sway men, the initiatives that shape human affairs.

There is an uncomfortable similarity between this description of the successful literary man, and Wells' account of the successful commercial adventurers in *Tono-Bungay*, published in the same year. It is not entirely fanciful, I think, to suppose that Wells himself felt uncomfortable on this score. Certainly he could be betrayed into blatantly insincere writing on the subject. In an early *Saturday Review* article, "Excelsior" (1895), he wrote:

> Better a little grocery, a life of sordid anxiety, love and a tumult of children, than this Dead Sea fruit of success. It is fun to struggle, but tragedy to win.

Quoting this passage in the *Autobiography*, Wells commented, "To which betrayal of a mood I add thirty-nine years later only one word: 'Nonsense.'" But the mood had infected several of his novels with its sentimentality: *Kipps*, for instance, where, at the end, the "little grocery" is transformed into a "little bookshop," conveniently cushioned against financial failure by a second, fortuitous source of income; or *Love and Mr Lewisham*, which

[8] *Language of Fiction* (1966).

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concludes with the hero unconvincingly reconciled to the ruination of his scientific career and the acceptance of humdrum domestic responsibilities.

At the most critical period of his own life, Wells was in almost exactly the same situation as Lewisham. Each young man won a scholarship to the Normal School of Science, started promisingly, then neglected his studies and lost his opportunity, having fallen passionately in love with an unsuitable young woman, whom he subsequently married. Each young man found himself in early manhood working as an unqualified teacher, without prospects and with growing family responsibilities. Fortunately for Wells, literature and the second Mrs. Wells provided an escape route. Mr. Lewisham was not so lucky. In novel after novel Wells worried at the same situation: the hero whose personal self-fulfilment, usually located in the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, is threatened or destroyed by a combination of imprudent marriage, socio-economic pressures and personal weakness. You find it in *Mr. Lewisham*; you find it in *Tono-Bungay*; you find it in *Marriage*; you even find it in "A Story of the Days to Come."

WELLS' MOST PRESSING MOTIVE for commencing a literary career was his need for money, and it persisted throughout his early career. The first part of the *Autobiography* vividly communicates his excitement at seeing his income rise. This didn't matter as long as, under the pressure of this ambition, or this insecurity, he produced works of the calibre of *The Time Machine* or *Dr. Moreau*. But the pattern of such novels as *Tono-Bungay* and *Marriage*, in which the heroes abandon science and their ideals to make a cynical fortune in commerce, suggests that Wells to some extent saw his own failure in scientific studies and his desperate, spectacularly successful switch to writing, in a similar light.[9] Furthermore, as a radical he may have felt compromised by the fact that the work which was bringing him success and all the good things of life was distinctly pessimistic, particularly about the prospects of a more equitable distribution of these good things in the near or distant future.

About the turn of the century he begins to force optimistic meanings out of his prophetic novels, with some damage to their imaginative life. Then he endeavours to confront the problem of the private pursuit of happiness in "realistic" social novels. But either the happiness is falsely contrived (as in *Kipps*) or it is falsely identified (as in *Mr. Lewisham*). What comes across most powerfully is Wells' felt sense of the confusion of values in society as a whole, and the consequent impoverishment of the individual lives within it, but only in *Tono-Bungay* is the style and structure of the novel designed to carry such a meaning. With *Mr. Polly* Wells found a solution, but it was an individualistic solution, not a collective one, and conveyed not "realistically," but through a kind of idyll of violence. Wells was back to the point he had reached in the scientific romances, Mr. Polly's arson being a private enactment of the earlier visions of global destruction. Again Wells sets off in a new direction—the novel of ideas—in pursuit of a literary mode that would be more than literary, that would offer some constructive solution to the problems it posed, and thus justify Wells to himself.

WELLS' RADICALISM was based on personal experience and keen observation of the inefficiency and injustices of the British social system. To him that system was essentially irresponsible. I am suggesting that he secretly, perhaps subconsciously, felt his own success had been contingent on that irresponsibility, and that his later career was one long, misguided effort to vindicate himself. This is necessarily speculation. But it would explain why he tended to disparage his early imaginative writing, and to dissociate himself, with excessive vehemence, from any pretensions to "pure" literary achievement. He refused to acknowledge the truth his own best work illustrates: that the artist's primary responsibility is to realise the maximum expressive possibilities of his own experience and his own intuitions—one which may cut across conventional public concepts of responsibility. In his honourable concern for the latter, Wells increasingly neglected the former.

An interesting piece, written in 1927, has been reprinted, in which Wells goes over this ground in weighing the relative merits of the man of science and the man of letters, represented by Pavlov and Shaw. Intellectually, his loyalties are all on the side of the former. But he is teased by the paradox that, "To the future Shaw will have contributed nothing, and yet he may be harder to forget." The irony and pathos of the piece is that Wells is weighing two alternatives on both of which he had, by 1927, turned his back. But he had left behind him several imaginative works which will be hard to forget. That they all came in the earlier part of his long career was more his misfortune than ours.

[9] In this context it is worth recalling (as C. P. Snow has in his recent memoir) that Wells always coveted a Fellowship of the Royal Society. He took enormous satisfaction in successfully submitting, at the age of seventy-eight, a scientific thesis for the degree of Ph.D. at London University.

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THEATRE

"Tell Me Lies About Viet Nam . . ."

Peter Brook & "US" — By FRANK KERMODE

I SAW *US* at the Aldwych on 21st October, the day of the Aberfan disaster, and a good moment to join the Anti-Death League. The newspapers and especially the television, forced by shock or the simple inadequacy of the media, into understatement, sounded right, McLuhan-cool, on the black mud and the dimly perceptible writhing of the rescue workers. The hot questions, bishops blaming the Coal Board and, perhaps, parents blaming God, not to speak of theatrical men blaming smugly cultured London housewives—all this would doubtless come later. But for the moment there were bodies to be carried from the classrooms; in the spectators emotion and thought sank into a shadowy pattern of tragedy, miming as it were for those parents the necessary acceptance. Aberfan, as reported in the media, sought and found its tragic paradigm. Later there could be arguments about that; perhaps what had seemed tragic was, in truth, Absurd; perhaps the tragic was our way of limiting our freedom to see Aberfan as a diagram of unfulfilled revolution, an allegory of the unburied past. For the religious there could be the belated production of texts, of typological comforts. But at first, at the moment of impact, Aberfan was represented to us as a tragic extreme case: a viscous, bone-shattering intruder into the human world, choosing its time (just after prayers) and its place (the school where we transmit our fictions of benevolence and control) and demanding the most elementary social response, of solidarity and acceptance.

At the Aldwych they had mislaid their cool. The hooded figures who stumbled hotly into the first-night audience, urging involvement, had been dropped, but they will quite rightly remain part of the folklore. They stand for the whole production; cutting them makes no difference to the hot and impure that remains. It would have been logical, though doubtless inexpedient, to follow through and abandon the whole project, since if that bit was a mistake everything else must be. As it is, the sole reason I can think of for urging anybody to see *US* is that it has some bearing on the strange crisis into which not our world but our theatre has somehow argued itself.

Mr. Peter Brook is a director of genius, whose intellectual resourcefulness and authority are not less impressive because they operate in entirely theatrical terms. The attendant danger is of theatrical excess, which can in the long run produce, by a kind of Alexandrian perversity, the opposite of theatre. Disciplined and complex stage manoeuvres become part of a plot to destroy drama, and whatever kind of truth drama can have. Even in the famous *Lear*, a tremendously disciplined and resourceful production, there were evidences of theatrical self-indulgence at the expense of the play and the legitimate expectations of the audience. And now one sees an intelligible but deplorable degeneration even from *Marat/Sade*. There the brilliantly sustained succession of theatrical *coups* lapsed, with awful doctrinaire deliberation, into the boring conversations of the principals, and tedium became almost a novel theatrical effect. Here there is almost nothing else but ill-written words illustrated by stunts and charades, scattered, noisy bright ideas which in their disconnection soon lose their impact, and the only question is which half engages the mind or the emotions less: the first, which is noisier and more active but sillier, or the second, which is dominated by a tirade by Miss Glenda Jackson so lacking in spontaneity and imagination that one cannot think it would make its mark in a one-night television late show. The script, incidentally, is by more hands than have co-operated in a single London production since about 1590, except in revue, and Mr. Brook is so intent on his theatrical breakthrough into the explicit, the factual, and the tedious, that he seems to have forgotten how good plays work. The first necessity is to see that they are well written, and to remember that there is nothing in the least ignominious about the traditional set of an audience's ex-

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pectation. You can modify it, surprise it, even wreck and rebuild it, but you cannot ignore it, unless you want to forfeit all the advantages of dramatic performance, which the theatre presumably exists to provide.

If one sounds unduly impatient, that is because Mr. Brook has established the tone of the discussion. *US* is worrying, though not at all as it was meant to be. As an instrument to help us find out what we feel about Viet Nam it is useless; any such intention is defeated by its theatrical failure. But as an indication that an important theatre and our best director are devoting much of their energy to a practical demonstration that they are dominated by a bad theory, it works. Raw exhortation, fact represented as raw, have no more place in the theatre than raw cruelty; they are theoretician's follies. It is useless to scream at us that the reason why we cannot distinguish between these "facts" and more comfortable fictions is that we own Minis and wall-to-wall carpeting. These "facts" are also fictions in the theatre, and they happen to be a great deal more comfortable, in their tedious way, than the fictions of, say, *Hedda Gabler*. Mr. Brook has long been thinking that the theatre makes things too easy for us. In *King Lear* he omitted the passage where the servant offers to bring Gloucester egg-whites for his bleeding face, preferring his own, or Jan Kott's, fiction to Shakespeare's, and presumably on the ground that Shakespeare's was too comfortable. In *US* we are denied the comforts of design or structure and given only a stage set on to which, or so it appears, is poured at random whatever came into the minds of many authors. If the idea of a play is such that nothing of this kind can be said in it, then, they suggest, we must do away with that idea. But of course such anti-plays depend absolutely upon everybody's having the idea of a play in his head. Without it, one would make nothing whatever of what was going on in *US* or in any other theatrical performance. And in so far as it labours to destroy that idea *US* gets closer to saying nothing whatever. It almost succeeds. So it can hardly do other than, to quote its own thin reiterated refrain, tell us lies, or nothing whatever, about Viet Nam.

By this I do not, of course, mean that it is too anti-American, or not anti-American enough, or even that it is nonsense, though I think it may be, to say that the terror of American arms in Viet Nam is a kind of extension of our own wickedness, the way we privately feel about our wives. It is true that in the presence of a marriage guidance counsellor we might invent the kind of euphemism satirised in the play, the briefing that never mentions blood or napalm. The colossal pop-art G.I. who hangs over, and later almost engulfs the stage, has a bomb instead of a penis, as the advertisers think we would like to wear our cars. But the business of the theatre is to refine, rather than to generalise, and this is merely a proclamation of original sin. The point is not that the play gets the war wrong, or gets original sin wrong, but simply that the techniques of propaganda are distinct from those of the theatre; *US* ends by being neither a demonstration nor a play. Whether the subject is Viet Nam or Aberfan, we learn, when the terms of reference are so specific, much more from the newspaper and from the television blur than the theatre can ever hope to tell us.

The company seemed somehow to know this; or so one accounts for the rigidity of the actors, for their obvious suspicion that what they were given to say was inaccurate in tone, without resonance, lacking in the emotional flexibility which makes actors flexible. I noticed that the music reflected this. The music of *Marat/Sade* shared in and enhanced the intensity of the content of the play. Here it ceased to be dull only at one point, where a tediously familiar theme was, at the opening of the second half, varied by eerie melismata from a muted trumpet. This bonus of mystery came from a formal quality totally absent in the rest of the play: a theme we have heard many times before was transformed, a relation was established between old and new. Such relations establish ease, strength, confidence, in player and audience; but in *US* they hardly exist. Glenda Jackson told us, with emphasis, that the events described were not to be thought of as signifying merely what happened in Viet Nam; and this point, in principle acceptable, though hysterically stated, was invalid in the theatre because the general falsity of the presentation made a lie of everything that was said, made the positive recommendations false and the actors involuntary hypocrites, as bogus as the mildly liberal G.I.s and the lazy corrupted Western journalists were represented as being. In such a context the burning of a butterfly becomes a disagreeable indulgence on the part of the player who does it. Where nothing relates to the truth, the scene in which a naked man, representing Viet Nam, is plastered with paint, and the paint rubbed off on to a sheet of paper, becomes a night-club stunt, an advertising trick, something odious. It tells us nothing about Viet Nam, though it happens to be a reasonably accurate image of the way the play was written.

So one remembers noise, frantic drilled movement, intellectual content so feeble and diffuse that it came as a shock to realise that its ex-

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ponents were stating that they took a very severe view of *us*, the muddled spectators. You lot down there, they were saying, there is no health in you. It is a defensible proposition, and one that, in its own way, the theatre has a right to defend. But that right is dependent upon an ancient contract, upon shared conventions and agreed communications here ignored, and not to be replaced by impudently censorious posturing.

US, then, fails not because of its subject, but because of its breakthrough into sheer non-drama. A bad producer, enslaved to convention, could not have made it. But in destroying or ignoring conventional accretions, Mr. Brook has rejected too much, and nothing holds the piece together save modishness, the most impermanent of adhesives. All these fragments of mime, easy allegories, stunts, charades, banal poems, need, if they are to cohere, some vastly publicised and impermanent fiat of fashionability; without it they are neither fact nor theatre, and achieve accidentally the kind of effect that *1066 and All That*, in the comic vein, achieved on purpose. Aberfan was cool, penny-plain; this is hot, tuppence-coloured, false. The slave of a smart theory, it is auto-destructive. A good play "about" Viet Nam would have an author, and might not even mention the place. In *Macbeth* the equivocating fiend lied like truth, and became the patron demon of the theatre. Mr. Brook, to whom such arguments are perfectly commonplace, has, with perverse theatrical skill, hit upon a way of making truth sound like lies.

Coming Out Fighting

"I hope when the fighting starts you'll be by my side
On the barricades" I told my friend. He said
"It depends what the fighting's about." What the fighting's about?
Fighting is about fighting, the crunch is about the crunch,
War about war—all that matters is
Who's by your side on the barricades.
So,
Seeing you, love, plumped out with bearing your child,
Sagging with the years of sorrow, new tired lines
Etched in that trusting face, I look at you
Knowing there are so many beautiful girls in the world,
Younger than you, and slimmer, nicer to know—
And give them up. Love isn't looks or grace,
Not cars or villas, not night flights to Madrid—
I'd rather lay my pudgy hand on yours,
Stained, now, and work-worn, than lay whoever you like—
Bardot, La Lollo, Loren. I see now
What always looked me straight in the face, so
Trustfully, love, trustfully, love, love
Is about love.

Philip Hobsbaum

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NOTES & TOPICS

London Commentary

"Into Europe," Again

JUST AFTER the breaking-off of negotiations for British entry into the European Economic Community (EEC), an editorial in ENCOUNTER expressed what at the time seemed the optimistic opinion that there was no need for despair despite a major disaster to the cause of European unity. Now, nearly four years later, a new British initiative with entry into the Common Market for its object has been taken, and it is difficult not to feel oneself back in 1961–62. The questions that failed to receive an answer then are now posed again—questions whose very reappearance in the forefront of Europe's political preoccupations can be taken to demonstrate their fundamental importance. Despite all attempts to bury it, the issue of "a wider Europe" can now be seen to have had its own vitality, to exist in its own right as a basic political problem and not merely a passing aspiration to be destroyed in the germ by a single rebuff.

Nor is it surprising that this problem should be felt as vital for the future of Europe. Since 1963 economic Europe has completed its agricultural policy; but political Europe has been becalmed. Not only has there been no progress towards political institutions, but there has also been a sense of political impotence abroad in Western Europe which all its prosperity cannot conceal. Within "the Six" nobody has had his way politically—not President de Gaulle, not Chancellor Erhard, not the European officials of the Brussels Commission. Opposing forces have cancelled each other out. The atmosphere has been one of stalemate and frustration.

Many things have changed since January 1963, but perhaps the most striking alteration in perspective is that which enables us to see that the Europe of the Six, as originally conceived in the early '50s, no longer provides an economic or political base sufficient to play the part envisaged for it in the world at large. The Six have done very well economically; far less well when it comes to making Europe's voice heard in the international forum. In the realm of technology, where the gap between America and the rest is growing daily greater, it has been necessary for France to go outside the Community in order to find a partner (Great Britain) with whom to construct the *Concorde*. There are good judges who believe that only speedy British entry into the Common Market will furnish even the remotest chance of the continuance of independent advanced technology within the countries of Western Europe. Mr. Wilson's offer of "a technological community" in his Guildhall speech showed that he is quite aware of the urgency of this problem and of the key position held by Britain with regard to it. But this is only one example stemming from "little Europe's" inexorable diminution over the last fifteen years through social, economic, and technical developments which are steadily pushing nations towards larger and larger regional units.

IT IS NO WONDER, therefore, that the Europe of EEC should once more be faced with the problem of what to do about "the other Europe," the Europe of Britain and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). And it is to Mr. Wilson's credit that, as a political leader whose opinions (and also prejudices) have run the other way in the past, he too should have been prepared to face this question and start a process of negotiation in which his own personal reputation will inevitably be deeply involved. Writing in these pages after two general elections [ENCOUNTER, December 1964 and June 1966] I myself stressed the necessity of finding for Britain a role in the world which I personally believed to lie in Europe and gave it as my opinion that this issue was one of the touchstones by which Mr. Wilson's place as a statesman would be judged. Now that he has made the decision that every British "European" must have wished him to make (and which must have disappointed the forces of xenophobia in his own party), it would be churlish to refuse to applaud. The Prime Minister's reputation as a devious political tactician has aroused suspicions that he is out primarily to "dish the Whigs" (in this case, the Tories) or even to bury the Common Market issue, but he is also perhaps more committed to success than either he or his critics realise. The sincerity of his approach and the rightness or wrongness of the tactics adopted to further it can be left until a verdict can be passed on the operation as a whole. In the meantime this new initiative must be taken to correspond to the interests of Britain and Europe, and the very difficulty of this highly complex diplomatic manoeuvre makes it an act of political courage.

That a Labour Prime Minister so soon after finding himself for the first time with a sizeable majority in the House of Commons should have

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made up his mind to reverse the anti-European Gaitskell policy of 1962 also indicates coercion by strong arguments. Ever since the autumn of 1964 the lesson of events for the new government has been one of British weakness and isolation. Despite journeys to Washington and to Moscow, despite Commonwealth conferences and peace missions to Viet Nam, it cannot be said that British policy has played an effective role in the world or, indeed, much of a role at all. Economically, there is no need to emphasise the precariousness of Britain's position over the last two years. These facts will not have been lost on the cabinet which includes such devoted Europeans as George Brown and Roy Jenkins, just as they have quite clearly not been lost on the parliamentary Labour Party. For the moment the government has coped with the economic crisis, courageously enough, by the prices and incomes freeze. But this state of siege cannot continue for ever. A more permanent solution must be found, and it is striking how many voices are now raised (even on the left wing of the Labour Party) to advocate turning towards Europe. Mr. Michael Foot with his suspicions of the priest-ridden foreigners across the Channel is becoming the centre of a dwindling rear-guard action. For all Mr. Wilson's care not to offend his followers' susceptibilities, it seems unlikely that a dog will bark on the benches behind him if he manages to do business in Europe.

If British attitudes have evolved to a point where opposition to entry into EEC has now become negligible, it is also true that there are some factors at least in the European conjuncture which are more favourable now than they were then. The feeling that the Europe of the Six is too small to fulfil the hopes placed in it could lead to a warmer welcome for newcomers. British entry into the Community, which, in 1963, gave rise to grave doubts on the part of many committed Europeans, could now appear as a solution for an otherwise insoluble problem or as an injection of new life into a movement that has lost its momentum. Above all, it is in politicising the Community that such an accession may prove to have its greatest effect. The recent deterioration in the West German political climate may well revive the fears that, in the early '50s, made British participation in common institutions so desirable for so many Europeans. Without enlargement of the Community the potential imbalance between German power and that of the other Five could spread Germany's instability to the rest of Western Europe. Another factor that has changed since 1963 is that, under President Johnson, there is a far less decided American view of what should happen in Europe than there was under President Kennedy. Whatever arrangements Mr. Wilson arrives at in his European negotiation seem fairly certain to be accepted in Washington.

But there is President de Gaulle. Will Mr. Wilson's new "merchant-venturing" suffer shipwreck on the icebergs of the Elysée, as Mr. Macmillan's did before him? Possibly—even probably, it might seem. But here again one or two things have changed in three years. Gaullist foreign policy has failed to woo Germany away from its connection with America, while at the same time helping to resuscitate German nationalism. Eight years of *la France seule* have not produced any genuine possibility of "going it alone" either in military or technological terms. Nor is it probable that Anglo-French co-operation in research and development would survive a new January press conference. The reverse side of Mr. Wilson's offer of a technological community is undoubtedly the implied threat that, without such a community, British industry would have to lapse into the position of becoming an American sub-contractor, and the chance of European participation in advanced technology—missiles, computors, nuclear engineering—would be lost.

Whether such arguments will influence President de Gaulle, whose policies in respect of Europe have so often appeared to be self-defeating, must be a matter for conjecture. But if, after their tour of European capitals, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Brown offer to sign the Treaty of Rome subject only to transitional arrangements, any attempt to veto British entry would be much more difficult than it was in 1963 and its consequences even more serious in terms of European cohesion.

No one can foresee how the coming round of talks will go. But, as far as Britain is concerned, the fact that both major political parties now agree on an approach to EEC is something of a landmark. At last the problem of Britain's position in the world is being posed in the right terms. At the very least if the French veto still applies, relations between Britain and the Community will have been made easier in any future situation where the disappearance of President de Gaulle may give greater opportunities for progress towards a Europe united economically and politically.

However, if solutions emerge from the forthcoming negotiations it is by no means certain that they will be the ideal solutions which those of us who want such a Europe would like to see. It must be recognised that, in present circumstances, any positive results are very hard to come by. They are, in fact, as hard to come by as understanding between Britain and France.

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Nor is it much use questioning Mr. Wilson's sincerity. It would have been very easy to make a "Declaration of Intent" to enter Europe and then leave it at that, letting it be understood that action was useless in the present political conjuncture. The programme of talks now announced goes a good deal beyond what most commentators would have expected, and the somewhat sibylline language in which the Prime Minister has presented his new move to Parliament must be accepted for the time being as part of the price to be paid for diplomacy unhampered by noises from the Labour Party.

Progress in the direction of Europe may be slow, but it is now possible for British "Europeans" to say to themselves with bated breath "*E pur si muove*—and sooner than we thought!" But perhaps to that quotation should be added an older one: "*Uno itinere non potest pervenire ad tam grande secretum*" ("It is not possible to arrive at so great a secret by one road"). It is probable that events will show that there are more roads to a united Europe than have been thought of by those who, in the past, have battled for this cause. Enthusiasts for German unity at the Frankfurt Assembly of 1848 would have been astonished to learn that, twenty years later, it would have been realised by Bismarck's Prussia. Without predicting anything as dramatic (or as unwelcome) as that, it is hard not to think that the impact on the present European tangle of a political tactician of Mr. Wilson's calibre will be considerable and may be unexpected in its results.

Anthony Hartley

Political Medicine Man

The Mumbo-Jumbo of Enoch Powell — By HENRY MILLER

AS MINISTER of Health, Mr. Enoch Powell is remembered by the medical profession chiefly for his sponsorship of the most ambitious amongst a series of unrealised plans for rebuilding the nation's hospitals. It was a plan that may have fulfilled the accepted function of such exercises in attracting immediate political credit to its progenitor, but it was soon whittled away as impracticable and unrealistically costed. The profession remembers him without enthusiasm. It is clear from his book[1] that the emotion is reciprocated. His present image as an apostle of *laissez-faire* Conservatism, bravely protecting the public from the demoralising effect of too much welfare, is more in character.

Mr. Powell's book is honest, but it makes depressing reading. In view of his political philosophy it is hardly surprising that he regards a health service "furnished free at the point of consumption" with evident distaste, and accepts as axiomatic that any such arrangement necessarily implies absolute and detailed central political control of the service. He is too intelligent a politician to hope to be loved, but he shares a common occupational delusion that the British public is as deeply attached to the archaic and creaking machinery of its Government as those who operate it appear to be. He considers it quite inconceivable that the public might possibly delegate responsibility for major national expenditure outside the circle of those elected representatives who have made such a conspicuous success of the job during the past two decades. Describing the high morale he encountered in the laboratories of a privately financed "non-commercial institution," he contrasts this with his "repeated and bitter experience" at the Ministry, when similar visits to institutions under his control were invariably characterised by violent attacks on ministerial parsimony. Curiously enough he makes no mention of one outstanding successful example of delegated control in the very field under discussion—the Medical Research Council, in whose establishments he would also encounter the highest morale and enthusiasm. Perhaps this is not entirely unconnected with the fact that the Council's administration is in the hands of dedicated and highly responsible experts—and not of politicians, either like Mr. Powell inherently unsympathetic to the purpose and ethos of his department, or like others even less memorable, whose brief incumbency represented nothing more significant than a step up (or down) in the game of political snakes-and-ladders.

Mr. Powell accepts the existing Ministerial pattern as heaven-sent. He dismisses lay and professional qualms about its perfection as manifestations of political ignorance. His ideal Minister would come to his department without

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[1] Enoch Powell, *A New Look at Medicine and Politics* (Pitman Medical, 7s. 6d.).

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any previous experience in the field concerned. That he should be a professional in it would be "a grave disadvantage": even prior interest of any degree would be disadvantageous, because he would be "involved rather than . . . aloof." (The reader's heart bleeds for the present Minister of Health, who must labour under the double burden of an intimate knowledge of hospital administration and a deep personal commitment to improve the service.) Mr. Powell assures us also that Cabinet membership is probably a handicap rather than an advantage to the departmental minister, interrupting "the smooth flow of administration and application of the ministerial mind." The reader will be relieved to learn that Mr. Powell as Health Minister was "never at variance with either of the Chancellors of the Exchequer" with whom he served, on any departmental matter. However, if he is a physician he may be pardoned the observation that a little more variance and a little less aloofness might have borne fruit in a somewhat less dilapidated health service.

The Minister, then, is to be an "amateur." Except for that, Mr. Powell sees the Minister's role in relation to his department as rather like that of a barrister engaged in a "case," who then moves on, dismissing it from his mind. He should not stay in his department for more than three years at the very most, otherwise his "initiative" will be blunted. This is the pattern of training the author envisages as fitting a man for ultimate promotion to the highest office, and he accepts his view as axiomatic. He may be right. Perhaps the only way to train Prime Ministers is at the expense of the discontinuous and often chaotic administration of this and other important sectors of national life. Who knows? What other method has been tried? But are we so delighted with the end-result of the system as to accept the method as unquestionable?

ALTHOUGH HE ARRIVES in his department in a state of quintessential ignorance, and will stay but briefly, the ideal Minister will "innovate." What kind of innovation he will conjure up on this insubstantial foundation is not specified, except that it should express something of his personal preference, capricious or otherwise. To the reader its only functions would appear to be those of bringing his name before the public, and of qualifying him for his next step up the ladder.

The author has not been allowed to remain unaware of what he peevishly refers to as the "continual deafening chorus of complaint which rises day and night from every part of the Health Service." But he evidently regards the possibility that it might express the justifiable anger of conscientious and frustrated professionals, denied the facilities to furnish the service they believe their patients need, as too remote to merit discussion. He attributes a central role in professional discontent to two genuine but more marginal factors. The first is the palpable supremacy of the lay bureaucrat in the decision-making apparatus of the service over those professionally engaged in providing it. Not only does he consider this arrangement ideal, but he would like to strengthen it to the extent of appointing a lay administrative superior to each of the Senior Administrative Medical Officers who is at present responsible for the organisation of a region's hospitals. I suspect that Mr. Powell might like a lay administrator to oversee the surgeon who will perform his operation. On second thoughts this reflection is perhaps unfair: the operation would probably not involve any expenditure of public funds not already estimated, and could therefore be regarded as unimportant enough to be left to an unassisted professional.

A further cause of discontent he correctly identifies as the centralisation, remoteness, and rigidity of the Ministry machinery—but his "New Look" comprises no suggestion for improving an admittedly unsatisfactory situation, which he cheerfully accepts as a necessary and inevitable feature of the service.

It is, however, the professionals' tedious and obsessive concern with money, expressed in their incessant demands for better facilities, better equipment, and more staff, that chiefly riles the ex-Minister. How different, he reflects, from the admirable fortitude of the teachers and the servants of local health services, who soldier on bravely, fired by pride born of local patriotism, to make the best of regrettably insuperable difficulties. Fortunately for the medical profession and even more fortunately for its patients—and unhappily for Ministers of the author's ilk—the doctor shares neither the teachers' relative political impotence, nor the now-marginal medical significance of the local authority emasculated of its clinical functions. The organisation and operation of a centre for modern cardiac or neurosurgery calls for personal as well as technical qualities of a very different order from those concerned with the administration of the ambulance services, home helps, and hostels for the aged; and such qualities show a low correlation with veneration for politicians. Men or women endowed with such qualities are also unlikely to be impressed by the casuistry displayed in Mr. Powell's sage observations that "the diversion of proportionately more effort and resources to an activity is rarely observed to have been a cause of

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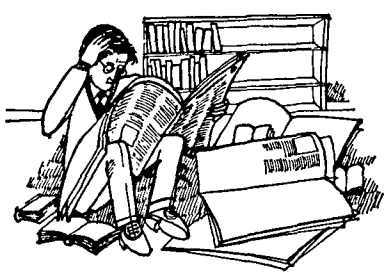
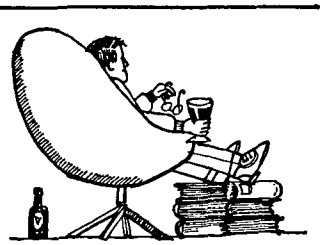
improvement in standards of efficiency" (p. 19) or that "What are called the 'deficiencies' of the National Health Service . . . are not deficiencies in the literal sense of the word" (p. 42).

Medicine and Politics makes no mention of the neglect of hospital building by a succession of impotent Ministries and uninterested administrations that has relegated us in this respect to such a lowly position amongst the more developed countries of the world. The remarkable fact that the nation's hospitals operate at all only by courtesy of the emigration policies of India and Pakistan is absolutely central to any current consideration of medicine and politics; but in some way it also inexplicably escapes the author's attention.

Regrettably, the reader will also search these pages in vain for any sign that the author gained anything from his contact with medicine—any enthusiasm for the subject entrusted to his tender care, some appreciation of medicine's human values, its scientific excitement, or its civilising influence. To him it is a commodity like groceries, to be costed, bought, and rationed. It is no exaggeration to say that his tone is antipathetic where it is not actually hostile. The consultant is witheringly referred to as "the great man"; matrons "smirk" about "the so-called shortage of nurses"; and technical advances in medicine and surgery are regarded as irritating complications of ministerial husbandry rather than triumphs of human ingenuity. It is the result of twenty years' cold-blooded political neglect of this kind that we are confronted today by a stream of medical emigration that began as a trickle and shows every sign of swelling to a torrent.

To ONE CONVINCED of the tremendous potential contribution of medicine to modern society, and committed to Aneurin Bevan's splendid conception of a comprehensive health service free and open to all—a universal mutual insurance scheme through which we all pay for the occasional child who needs an elaborate heart operation—the reading of this book is a salutary as well as a fascinating experience. Even the most convinced democrat is bound to have some qualms as to the wisdom of a situation that can consign a great profession to a politician of this kidney. Nevertheless we must be grateful to Mr. Powell, whose *exposé* is likely to increase public as well as professional pressure to sustain the service—and in an era of remarkable technological advance in medicine to sustain means to develop. And although *Medicine*





Geopolitics can seem
Unnerving to the student
In a world where reign supreme
Not nice men, nor prudent.
Never shirk it! Face the worst!
Evade the news no longer,
Simply have a Guinness first;
Soon you'll feel much stronger!

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and Politics tells us nothing about the former, it is very revealing about the latter. The only principles mentioned are those operational principles of government to which the author is so deeply attached. He makes clear beyond doubt that national financial priorities are decided predominantly by electoral considerations—in other words by the politicians' devotion to the cause of staying in or getting into office, regardless of other considerations. But electoral considerations are also an instrument that can be used to shame or bully a government into switching expenditure from one channel to another. As the deplorable facts about the present state of the Health Service become generally known, the public may well instruct its politicians that it would prefer a more effective Health Service to vast expenditures on obsolescent national extravagances. Any of us may urgently need a bed in a first-class hospital, today or tomorrow. If the service is to be salvaged there is not much time.

International Commentary

In the Shadow of the Apocalypse

By Raymond Aron

AT THE TIME of President Kennedy's arrival in the White House the guiding idea from which I started to try to think about the international conjuncture was one of *the solidarity of the two great powers against total war* of which they would be the first victims. Inevitably hostile to each other because of their rivalry and the incompatibility of their ideologies, the United States and the U.S.S.R. have one supreme interest in common. They neither wish to nor are capable of ruling together; but they are resolved, in so far as each of them is now exposed to the attacks of the other, not to engage in mutual destruction. This politico-strategic doctrine was openly taught in America's universities and specialised institutes; it was officially adopted by President Kennedy who had been convinced by the arguments of advisers recruited from Harvard or the Rand Corporation.

At that time, however, the logically implicit limited agreement between the great powers (as we see it today) was paralysed by three factors: uncertainty as to the relationship of their nuclear forces, Mr. Khrushchev's language, and the Berlin crisis. World opinion had ended by being shaken, less by Soviet boasting, than by electoral polemics in the United States. Would American inferiority in ballistic missiles (the famous "missile gap") become a reality in 1963 or 1965? Supposing that this partial inferiority did not really affect the world balance of terror, would not the Soviet leadership be induced, even by an illusory consciousness of superiority, to take risks and underestimate American steadfastness?

These questions were all the more legitimate in that, five years ago Soviet leaders—Mr. Khrushchev as well as official military writers—most often talked as if they did not wish to enter into the American way of thinking. The Soviet Prime Minister used to threaten, if in rather vague terms, either to "reduce to ashes" airfields used by American espionage aircraft (the U-2) or else to reply to "imperialist agression" in any part of the world by the use of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. John Foster Dulles' concept of "massive retaliation" which had been abandoned by President Kennedy had become Russian doctrine. American authors put forward the doctrine of the "flexible response." Soviet authors described the inevitable escalation that would follow once the two great powers clashed. So that I asked myself whether the asymmetry of the strategic doctrines and the Soviet refusal to sign a nuclear test-ban treaty (the practical moratorium which had lasted since 1958 ended in autumn 1961) were not due to an error in calculation: whether Mr. Khrushchev did not think he could profit from the fear then aroused by atomic war—a fear that he felt quite as strongly as his opponent, but which he pretended to ignore.

The Cuban crisis of October-November 1962 dispelled this illusion. Mr. Khrushchev was rash enough to build a base for medium-range ballistic missiles in Cuba, and an American semi-ultimatum forced on him the choice between a response in another part of the world (where he would have enjoyed a superiority in

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conventional weapons comparable to that of the United States off the Florida coast), the use of the ultimate weapon, or retreat. It appears that the men in the Kremlin scarcely hesitated, and that they preferred retreat and Chinese accusations of "capitulationism" to the unforeseeable risks of a long crisis.

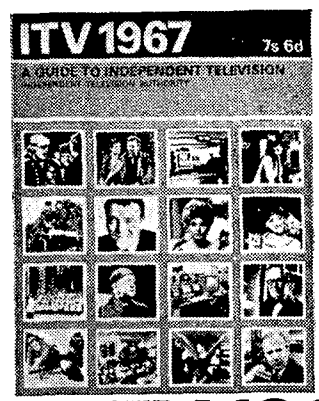
NOT A SHOT had been fired except by the Cubans who had brought down an American reconaissance plane, and yet diplomatic notes supported by military preparations had conveyed to Moscow a message whose meaning was clear. Deterrence ceased to be an abstraction. The Soviet leaders discovered (perhaps with surprise) that, in certain circumstances, the President of the United States would not hesitate before the dangers of direct confrontation, even with a state in possession of thermo-nuclear weapons. Mr. Khrushchev knew the moral of the crisis and the defeat. He ceased trying to change the *status quo* in the old capital of the *Reich*, and henceforward began to speak the same nuclear language as John F. Kennedy. In this respect nothing has changed since Mr. Khrushchev left the political scene and Lyndon B. Johnson entered the White House.

Soviet strategists may continue to show a certain scepticism with regard to the subtleties for which American analysts show such predilection, and they sometimes still suggest that local wars will bring about unlimited escalation if nuclear powers are involved. But the men in the Kremlin are now more inclined to prudence, possibly more than U.S. presidential advisers—even without taking into consideration the superiority now assigned by most observers to the U.S.A. in numbers of nuclear weapons and vehicles of delivery.

In any case, the phase of acceleration of the armaments race of the early '60s (the restarting of atmospheric nuclear testing, first by the U.S.S.R., then by the U.S.A.) has been replaced in the mid-'60s by a phase of slow-down. Both are developments strictly in accordance with the logic of this curious hostility limited by the common will not to perish together. The signing (in July 1963) of the Moscow Treaty on a partial nuclear test ban and the establishment of a direct line between the Kremlin and the White House were the symbols of this pact between enemies against total war—a war which would be far more catastrophic for either of them than a local defeat in any part of the globe.

THE RUSSO-AMERICAN rapprochement has as its basic objective the reduction of the nuclear danger. But it has a political context which has brought it about and which it affects in turn. For example, we are today better informed about the various episodes of Sino-Soviet conflict. In 1957 an agreement was reached between Moscow and Peking providing for Soviet aid to the Chinese atomic programme. Two years later, after operations carried out in the Formosa straits in 1958 by Mao's forces, this agreement was denounced by the Soviet Union. The Russians clearly wished to keep the monopoly of nuclear weapons within "the Socialist camp," and this was one of the causes of the break between the two great Marxist-Leninist powers. This was a conflict in accordance with century-old experience of the relations between sovereign states. One power wished to carry by itself the "supreme responsibility" for the strategy of the alliance, the other power nursed the traditionally legitimate ambition of "depending on no one." These contradictory demands do not date from the atomic era. But how can they be reconciled when the decisions to be taken concern the possible use of nuclear weapons, that is, the life and death of millions of men?

Perhaps Mr. Khrushchev only decided to sign the Moscow agreement in 1963 after having lost hope of re-establishing the unity of his Socialist



ITV 1967

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camp. For, by signing a treaty with his enemy whose evident purpose was to make the acquisition of nuclear weapons more difficult for his Chinese ally, he revealed to the eyes of the world a schism which was to be aggravated still further by public polemics. To be sure, the Paris of General de Gaulle interpreted the Moscow treaty in exactly the same way as Peking. The three members of the atomic club were trying to prevent other states from doing what they themselves had done. Relations between Paris and Washington suffered from a treaty which leaders in Washington thought to be in the interests of peace and, therefore, of humanity itself. General de Gaulle saw it as a demonstration of the egotism (and even of the cynicism) of states, *ces monstres froids*.

However bad relations may be today between Washington and Paris, however comparable the French and Chinese refusals to accept the authority of the "leader" of their respective camps may be, the differences are more marked than the resemblances because the diplomacy of democratic states has different rules from that of totalitarian ones. Common ideology is not enough to hold an alliance together. The split between Moscow and Peking may have had as its starting-point a clash of national interests. But it would not have had the same character if each of the two rivals had not immediately translated into the language of ideology its own conception of its objectives or of the expedient strategy, and had not tried to win over to its cause the other Marxist-Leninist parties throughout the world. Both in their alliances and in their disputes Communist states are neither exclusively determined by their ideologies nor indifferent to the historical philosophy in which they claim to believe. The United States and France remain allies more easily even when they do not arrive at an understanding—because strategic controversies, great political debates, differences of opinion, all belong to the normal routine of democracy.

Still, one question intrudes itself. The *détente* between the Soviet Union and the United States, the Sino-Soviet conflict, the efforts of France and China to build up national atomic forces, a Gaullist diplomacy independent of the U.S.A. in Europe and opposed to American policy in South-east Asia—do all these developments mean the end of the bi-polar system and the beginning of a new period of international relations?

FIRST, it should be remembered that bi-polarism was only ever effective on the military plane and in a limited area of the world (for the sake of simplification, one might say "in the northern hemisphere"). Now, militarily speaking, bi-polarism still remains in force: the weapons possessed by the Russians and the Americans are incomparably superior to those available to any other state. The old world—like Germany, like Berlin—remains divided. But the way in which men experience these historic facts—thermonuclear bi-polarism, the division of the old world—has changed.

The capacity for destruction possessed by the giant states does not correspond to a proportionate capacity for controlling their friends or their enemies. The most terrifying weapons simply do not happen to terrorise those deprived of them. Albania defies the Soviet Union; Cuba defies the United States. It is as if nuclear force were changed into diplomatic power with greater difficulty as the weapons become more monstrous, more inhuman, weapons of "the last resort" whose use against a state which has none is "inconceivable." Or it is as if the Russian and American thermo-nuclear systems mutually paralysed each other. They serve to forestall the widening of local conflicts, but they only exercise a very limited influence on relations between great and small powers, especially in the southern hemisphere.

Certainly it would be wrong to underestimate the constant, though most frequently invisible, effect of nuclear weapons which is partly comparable to the effect of the British Navy in the 19th century. Communist China harasses with words the "revisionist" ally (or the "imperialist enemy") in the Siberian north and in South-east Asia. It does not plunge into an open aggression, or even take the risk of intervention in Viet Nam. If the United States can with impunity keep a garrison in West Berlin, send an army of 300,000 men to South Viet Nam, and bomb Hanoi and Haiphong, it is because it is militarily the strongest power in the world. America is capable of destroying North Viet Nam, but it can have no assurance of forcing the capitulation of the Hanoi leadership and, less still, that of the Viet Cong forces. Military strength remains the basis of the international order; it is not decisive everywhere or in all circumstances.

INSIDE THE TWO EUROPEAN BLOCS symptoms of disintegration have multiplied in the course of these last years. Helped by the Sino-Soviet conflict each of the East European states in its own way has affirmed its desire for independence. They have all re-established relations with the West, and all have rejected the exclusive domination of Russian culture or Marxist-Leninist ideology. Goods, men, and ideas are passing more and more through what once was the "Iron Curtain." Bilateral agreements between individual countries of Eastern and Western Europe are increasing whether it is a question

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of trade, technology, or culture. Since 1956 the Moscow leaders have adapted themselves to a progressive transformation of their "camp": it was once a mono-cephalic bloc and it has now become an alliance guided by the strongest state, but which does not deprive the other states of a certain freedom in the management of their affairs or even participation in the common strategy. Since the Cuban crisis these same leaders have accepted (at least provisionally) the present status of Berlin and no longer brandish their weapons to obtain its modification.

IN THIS calmer atmosphere, in the absence of real fear of war, members of the Atlantic alliance feel less compelled to solidarity with the United States, whose protection is still essential for them, but seems to them in any case established. In particular, French diplomacy which, since 1958, had asserted its independence in various ways (withdrawal of certain military units, veto on the entry of Great Britain into the Common Market, recognition of Communist China, criticism of American policy in South Viet Nam) has passed to an additional stage by withdrawing from NATO. In the course of his journey to Moscow General de Gaulle even conjured up an alliance between "France and Russia" (or the Soviet Union)—true, only a partnership concerning science and culture, and not a military or political alliance. It is nonetheless a fact that all these changes give rather a different picture of the old world from that which an observer would have seen five years ago. In the line of present events it is not impossible to imagine on history's horizon the reunification of Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals."

But, for the time being, it is only a question of more or less distant contingencies. As long as Germany remains divided, the basic stake of the Cold War in Europe will remain unchanged and the consequences of the Second World War will not be liquidated. It is on the territory of the *D.D.R. (Deutsche Demokratische Republik)* that the twenty Soviet divisions are stationed which represent a threat to Western Europe and compel the states of Eastern Europe to a minimum of discipline. A territorial settlement different from that which has allowed Western Europe's recovery—and then a *détente*—can only be the end-term of a long evolution. Negotiations, if they were to take place tomorrow, would require the participation of everyone: of the rulers of Bonn and Washington as much as of those of Paris or Moscow.

Outside the two European blocs the so-called "uncommitted states," with multifarious versions of neutrality and neutralism, are more numerous and still less united today than they were five years ago. The African states are attracting less attention from the two great powers because of their instability, their weakness, and the passive resistance they have put up to Russian and Chinese "infiltrations." Perhaps the international system is tending to split up into sub-systems, some with their own balance of forces, with local rivalries (the Middle East, the Indian sub-continent), all connected in some way to the global system but without being a reflection of it.

AT THE PRESENT TIME, one event dominates international relations: the Viet Nam war. This, like the Korean war in 1950, is probably due in large part to accidental circumstances. Sixteen years ago, the men in the Kremlin made an error in their calculations and were mistaken as to real American intentions. In Viet Nam the United States has become progressively involved without ever having taken the decision to do so in total awareness. The main American aim now is not to "safeguard democracy" in South Viet Nam, but to prove that it has the material and moral capability to check subversion in the same way as open aggression.

It is a tragic affair, but the Viet Nam war, like that of Korea (which had spread such a vast fear throughout the world) should prove to be only what historians coolly record as "a vicissitude" provided that the course of history does not escape men's control. The Chinese have no means of effective intervention nor have the Russians, so distant from the battlefield. Neither of them has any interest in a direct confrontation with the military power of the United States. North Viet Nam can probably gain most of its objectives by submitting to a change of method, and moving from the jungle and rice-paddies to the conference table.

With whatever mixture of optimism or disquiet immediate perspectives may be viewed, the fundamental problems of power relations between states remain the same. Tomorrow China in its turn will possess a nuclear arsenal. Like the United States and the Soviet Union, like Great Britain and France, it will have to learn the art of using nuclear weapons in diplomacy in such a way as never to have to employ them in a military way. But how long can one threaten without having to execute one's threats? Can the diplomatic strategic game in the shadow of the apocalypse be prolonged indefinitely? Is it possible to get out of this game?

The great powers, provided they are reasonable, will not be faced with *une guerre à mort*. But if philosophers have often called man a reasonable being, they have rarely applied this adjective with the same assurance to man's history.

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The Literature of Silence

From Henry Miller to Beckett & Burroughs — By IHAB HASSAN

O lovely green dragon of the new day, the undawned day, come, come *in touch, and release us from the horrid grip of the evil-smelling old Logos! Come in silence, and say nothing.*

D. H. LAWRENCE, *Apocalypse*

NOWADAYS, the idea of an *avant-garde* in literature seems unduly naïve. Inured to crisis, we have also lost the confident sense of direction. Which way is forward? Literature, turning against itself, aspires to silence, leaving us with uneasy intimations of outrage and apocalypse. If there is an *avant-garde* in our time, it is probably bent on discovery through suicide. Thus the term anti-literature, like anti-matter, comes to symbolise not merely an inversion of forms but will and energy turned inside out. Is the future, then, all vagrancy and disaster for all who profess the Word?

Though I cannot believe that the Word exhausts the possibilities of spirit, I know enough to admit that disaster comes and goes in cunning rhythms. Mystics have always maintained that the way down is always the way out, and that the end of things heralds a new beginning. Negative transcendence, as we nowadays say, is transcendence nevertheless. And therefore silence in literature does not necessarily augur the death of spirit.

The point to be made about the new literature is different: whatever is truly new in it evades the social, historical, and aesthetic criteria which defined the identity of the *avant-garde* in other periods. The force of evasion (or absence) in the new literature is radical indeed; it strikes at the roots and induces a great silence. But the same force, moving in trunk and foliage, bursts into a great babel of noises. The most audible of these is the cry of outrage, the voice of apocalypse. Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett, both intimates of silence, are both such obsessive babblers; between them, they sound all the notes of the new hollow speech. Their conjunction is therefore no mere conceit. Standing as mirror images of the contemporary imagination, they end by reflecting its peculiar assumptions. In old-fashioned parlance, they are the two masters of the *avant-garde* today.

BUT MY DISCOURSE on Miller and Beckett may become inaudible without some clarification of the terms of silence. Let me begin with outrage.

"Is art always an outrage—must it by its very nature be an outrage?" Lawrence Durrell, who had Miller in mind, once asked. We can grant that art contains an element of danger and even subversion without conceding that all art is outrage. A particular genre of modern literature, however, seems to vindicate Durrell's view; it constantly touches on the experience which awes him. That experience is one of metaphysical revolt: Ahab striking the sun if it insulted him, or Ivan Karamazov returning his life-ticket to God. It is metaphysical revolt and at the same time metaphysical surrender, which is the desire for nothingness: "the cry of the mind exhausted by its own rebellion," as Camus put it. In outrage, then, the very being of man is put on trial. What ensues is a dialectic of violence, demonic action and demonic reaction compressed into a terrible unity which becomes finally a naught.

The violence I associate with the new literature is obviously of a special kind. It presupposes Dachau and Hiroshima but is not necessarily limited by them. It is absurd in the sense that no meaning or value can be assigned to it. Its function is to turn men into things. Under its pressure, the metamorphosis of the human form is downward, towards the worms of Beckett, the insect people and sentient ooze of Burroughs. It is not temporal but spatial, not historical but ontological, an inescapable

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part of the landscape. Indeed, as Frederick Hoffman argues in *The Mortal No*, this landscape of violence suggests a "total withdrawal of the humanly familiar from both assailant and victim. Moreover, the assailant and the victim are both part of the landscape." This metaphor of violence as landscape or inscape is an extreme definition of outrage which my discussion assumes. We can begin to see such a landscape take shape in the surreal Broadway scenes of Miller's *Tropic* books, and we can see what is left of it, as violence recedes into death, in the empty spaces of Beckett's *Endgame* or *How It Is*. Over these scenes there always hangs a frightful stillness.

PRECISELY AT THIS POINT, a reversal of motive may take place in the literature of silence; a new term may come into play. For if outrage is a metaphor of the void, may it not also serve as an appeal to being, and thus beget its opposite, which is a metaphor of apocalypse?

The transformation is easy to see in Negro literature where old-fashioned protest yields to modern outrage and outrage becomes apocalypse. Thus James Baldwin derives the title of his threatening book from a Biblical epigraph: "God gave Noah the rainbow sign: No more water, *the fire next time*." Apocalyptic violence, as D. H. Lawrence knew, can be conceived by the oppressed as retribution rather than reward, and even the Millennium can be understood by them as an idea of power rather than of love. In other types of recent literature, however, the feelings behind apocalyptic metaphors are more complex. Implied in them is something close to a total rejection of Western history and civilisation. Implied in them, too, is a rejection of human identity, the image of man as the measure of all things. "I want to be a machine," says Andy Warhol, and whether he speaks in earnest or in jest, he speaks for the cripples of Beckett, the satyrs of Miller, and the junkies of Burroughs. Indeed, revulsion against the Western self strikes deeper than the repudiation of history and civilisation. When such loathing fails to find consummation in orgiastic destruction, it may spend itself in Zen Buddhism, Pataphysics, or even Camp.

Revulsion against the self serves as a link between the destructive and visionary impulses of modern apocalypse; it prepares for rebirth. Thus D. H. Lawrence believes: "Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen." The sun, however distant, is within view of the eye. Whitman, who is in some ways more prophetic of our mood, locates millennial perfection in the everlasting present:

> *There was never more inception than there is now,*
> *Nor any more youth or age than there is now,*
> *And will never be any more perfection than there is now.*

Apocalypse is *now!* The term recovers its original sense, which is literally revelation; vision penetrates the perplexities of the moment to the heart of light. In current parlance, this antinomian belief is sometimes called the alteration of consciousness, and traces of it may be recognised in the psychedelic experiments of Alpert and Leary, in the poetry of Ginsberg, in the Reichian view of orgasm advertised by Norman Mailer, and in the psycho-mystic revelations of Norman O. Brown. The alteration of consciousness is also the constant hope of Miller throughout his apocalyptic harangues, and the object of parody in Beckett's Cartesian monologues, both of which project antithetical states of wordless perfection. Revelation, however, is not confined to shamanistic frenzy or unearthly trance. As Leslie Fiedler put it in *Waiting for the End* (1963): "We can *see* a different world without firing a shot or framing a syllogism, merely by altering our consciousness; and the ways to alter it are at hand...." This is the dream of a revolution to end all revolutions—and perhaps all dreams.

OUTRAGE AND APOCALYPSE, then, provide mirror images of the contemporary imagination, images that contain something vital and dangerous in our experience. They are also mirror images in the sense that Miller and Beckett reflect inverse worlds. For Beckett leaves us with a world so depleted of life that nothing short of a cataclysm can renew it; we are close to the absence of outrage. And Miller presents us with a chaotic world constantly on the verge of transformation; we are witness to the rage of apocalypse. What both worlds share is the decree of silence. For the human tongue is speechless in fright and ecstasy.

YET IF THE NEW literature can be delimited by the extreme metaphors of outrage and apocalypse, other ideas help to maintain the silence at its centre. Foremost among these, perhaps, is the idea of absurd creation which compels the author to deprecate and even to spurn his activity. "Creating or not creating changes nothing," Camus said. "The absurd creator does not prize his work. He could repudiate it." Thus the imagination re-

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nounces its ancient authority, finding its apotheosis not in the romantic idea of the damned poet but in the ironic attitude of the wordless author binding a sheaf of blank pages.

When the writer deigns to put words to paper, he is apt to conceive anti-literature either as pure action or futile play. The view that art is action, we know, finds sanction in Sartre's *What is Literature?* To speak is to act, Sartre claims, and everything we name loses its innocence, becoming part of the world we live in. If art has value, it is because art declares itself as a public appeal. Likewise, Camus extolled (in *The Myth of Sisyphus*) *savoir-vivre* over *savoir-faire*. This view finds a strange and defiant conclusion in the action paintings of Jackson Pollock who saw art not as a public appeal but as the process of creating art. This process is individual if not entirely private; its value redounds to the author more than to his audience. Miller's view is unexpectedly similar. For him writing is autobiography, and autobiography is therapy which is a form of action upon the self. "We should look to the diary . . . ," Miller says, "not for the truth about things but as an expression of this struggle to be free of the obsession for truth." The struggle belongs mainly to the diarist, or, when the action is directed outward, to the poet; for Miller also says: "I do not call poets those who make verses, rhymed or unrhymed. I call that man poet who is capable of profoundly altering the world."

Writing for Beckett, however, is absurd play. In a certain sense, all his works may be thought of as a parody of Wittgenstein's notion that language is a set of games, akin to the arithmetic of primitive tribes. Beckett's parodies, which are full of self-spite, designate a general tendency in anti-literature. Hugh Kenner brilliantly describes this tendency when he states: "The dominant intellectual analogy of the present age is drawn not from biology, not from psychology (though these are sciences we are knowing about), but from general number theory." Art in a closed field thus becomes an absurd game of permutations, like Molloy sucking stones at the beach; and "the retreat from the word" (the phrase is George Steiner's) reduces language to pure ratio.

THE CONCEPTIONS of literature as game and as action merge in another form of silence: literary obscenity. The term is notoriously difficult to define except by court action; I use it here to refer mainly to works which connect obscenity with protest. It is easy to understand that in a culture given to sexual repression, protest may possess the motive and ring of obscenity. The literature which exposes this motive is thus a literature of revolt. Obscenity, however, is cruelly reductive; its terms, counters, and clichés are sharply limited. When the anger behind it is chilled, obscenity appears as a game of permutations, relying on few words and fewer actions. Surely this is the double impression we take from the writings of the Marquis de Sade: that his protest is monstrous and his game is finally numbing. Sade, whom it is fashionable nowadays to consider the first *avant-gardist*, projects a curious stillness; his obscene and repetitious violence muffles language. In bequeathing porno-aesthetics to literature, he also made it possible for Mailer, say, or for Burroughs, to develop parodies of sexual violence. The sexual heroics of Miller are still too naïve to realise their full potential for self-parody, while the excremental obsessions of Beckett parody themselves and deny all love. In the game of parody as in the act of obscenity, anti-languages rule; and Miller and Beckett, standing again in contrast, suggest the manner of genital and anal pornography.

BUT THE LITERATURE of silence manages to deny the time-honoured functions of literature in yet another way: it aspires to an impossible concreteness. The new literalism emerges in the *musique concrète* of Stockhausen, in the collages of found objects of Cornell and Robert Rauschenberg, in the environmental sculpture of Kurt Schwitters, and, under the combined influence of Schwitters and Apollinaire, in that hybrid form of verbal and visual effects, concrete poetry, which relies on the alphabet to make pictures. A less obvious aspiration to concreteness may be sensed in Truman Capote's latest work, *In Cold Blood*. Declining the appeal of Fantasy, Capote pretends to adhere meticulously to Fact, and writes, as he claims, the first "non-fiction novel." In recent European literature, neo-literalism is sometimes linked with the phenomenology of Husserl. A difficult thinker who exerted considerable influence on men as different as Sartre and Heidegger, Husserl cannot be summarised without gross distortions. Yet it is fair to say that the result of Husserl's philosophy is to define a pure form of subjective consciousness which has no components and which can never become an object of experience. This form of consciousness, isolated by a series of "reductions," is not part of the common world of objects, feelings, or sensations. What we usually accept as the inmost self, the ego, must itself be "bracketed," or set aside, as an empirical unity subject to the final "transcendental reduction" which yields pure consciousness.

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Stated crudely, then, the true self is unknowable and, perhaps like Beckett's anti-hero, unnamable.

How does this conclusion affect the novel?

The old principles of causality, psychological analysis, and symbolic relations, principles on which the bourgeois novel once comfortably rested, begin to crumble. Beckett's *Molloy* may have been the first novel to be written in the new manner though Sartre's *La Nausée* attracted wide attention. In Roquentin, we see a character convinced of universal irrelevance; things have broken loose from words, and no connection between subject and object can be made. It remains for Robbe-Grillet to reject the humanism of Sartre by rejecting his panan-thropism. If man desires to be alone, declining communion with the universe, if man proves, after all, not to be the answer to the eternal riddle of the Sphinx, then his fate can be neither tragic nor absurd. "Things are things, and man is only man," Robbe-Grillet argues happily. "Henceforth, we refuse all complicity with objects. . . . We must refuse, that is, any idea of pre-established order." It follows that the novelist can be only a literalist, naming the names, or entertaining pure images. Without character, plot, metaphor, or meaning, without any pretence of "interiorness," the French anti-novels of Sarraute, Butor, and Robbe-Grillet aim, like the new cinema, at the effect of a silent reel. What Harold Rosenberg says seems equally apposite to literature as to the visual arts: "All the French alchemists are after the same thing, the actuality which is always new —and which will come only forth out of silencing the existing rhetoric."

Silence in the new literature is also attained through radical irony, a term I apply to any statement which contains its own ironic denial. The Cretan who claimed all Cretans were liars may serve as an example; the machine of Tinguely, which has no function but to destroy itself, serves as another. Radical irony, in other words, requires not a collage of found objects, but an empty canvas. Its modern origins may be traced back to some of the major figures of our century, notably Kafka and Thomas Mann. Kafka, we know, came close to rendering the experience of blank and frozen spaces. And Mann prized the voice of consummate irony, rising only to cancel itself in self-parody which, as Mann came to believe, held the only hope of art. Erich Heller is right in noting: "Art tragically laments the loss of its own mystery in *Doctor Faustus*, and gaily reports it to the cosmic police in *Felix Krull*." This trend finds still earlier precedents among the German

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Romantics and the French Symbolists. In recent times, however, radical irony has increased in sophistication. Heidegger's idea of "the mystery of oblivion" and Blanchot's view of literature as a form of "forgetfulness" suggest a theoretical development of irony. More concretely, Mailer's *An American Dream* (1964) frankly burlesques, and actually denies, the novel form by transforming it into pop art. Nathalie Sarraute's *The Golden Fruits* (1963) is a novel about a novel called *The Golden Fruits* which cancels itself by drifting into oblivion, during the act of reading. This reflexive technique was probably developed by Beckett; it was certainly perfected by him. The conclusion of his latest novel, *How It Is* (1964), is that the book is really about "How It Wasn't." Such legerdemain is not frivolous; for the paradox of art employing art to deny itself is rooted in the power of human consciousness to view itself both as subject and object. Within the mind is the Archimedean point: when the world becomes intolerable, the mind lifts itself to nirvana or drops into madness. Or it may resort to radical irony in order to reveal art at the end of its tether. Thus in Beckett, literature rigorously unmakes itself, and in Miller, literature pretends, erratically, to be life. What is harder to discern in radical irony is that it disguises genuine aggressions against art. Through it, the artist makes his last devotions to the Muse, and through it he desecrates her too. This ambivalence is obvious in both Miller and Beckett.

FINALLY, LITERATURE STRIVES for silence by accepting chance and improvisation; its principle becomes indeterminacy. By refusing order, order imposed or discovered, this kind of literature refuses purpose. Its forms are therefore non-telic; its world is the eternal present. We are invited to regain our original innocence; error and revision, now irrelevant, are forever banished. Like the stepping stones in a Zen garden, random literature seems to celebrate things as they are. This impression is confirmed by the writings of a man as much a composer as a poet: John Cage, who, more than Mathieu or Satie, has shocked his public into a sacramental awareness of random composition. This is what Cage says in *Silence*:

> Our intention is to affirm this life, not to bring order out of a chaos nor to suggest improvements in creation, but simply to wake up to the very life we're living, which is so excellent once one gets one's mind and one's desires out of its way and lets it act of its own accord.

Traces of this attitude may be found throughout the works of Henry Miller, and in the poetry of Ginsberg, the novels of Jack Kerouac, and the later stories of J. D. Salinger. Unlike Cage, however, these authors seem superficial in adapting their spiritual life to the practice of literature. Miller, for instance, likes to pose as a garrulous *raconteur* despite all his affection for Tao and Milarepa. Whatever appears random in his work can be ascribed less to design than to disposition. Many years ago, Dadaists and Surrealists came close to the dismemberment of literary forms with less spiritual *chic*. Perhaps this is also true, in our time, of random authors like Marc Saporta and William Burroughs. In *Number 1*, Saporta invites the reader to create his own book each time he sits down to a set of inscribed cards. His "shuffle novel" is a strategem which proposes chance as a legitimate part of the literary experience. And Burroughs, who believes that to speak is to lie, attempts to evade mendacity through "The Cut Up Method of Brion Gysin." Harking back to the Dadaist antics of Tristan Tzara, Burroughs explains:

> Method is simple: take a page or more or less of your own writing or from any writer living or dead. And written or spoken words. Cut into sections with scissors or switch blade as preferred and rearrange the sections. Looking away. Now write out the result....
>
> Applications of cut up method are literally unlimited cut out from time limits. Old word lines keep you in old word slots. Cut your way out. Cut paper cut film cut tape. Scissors or switch blade as preferred. Take it to cut city.

Dadaist collage, Zen Buddhism, or even Johann von Neumann's theory of games seem equally valid in freeing man from the word habit. Burroughs, who has something in common with Beckett, ends by sharing with the latter the jerky rhythms of a subtracting machine. The machine has one purpose: to operate on language, and subtract thereof all meaning.

CLEARLY, THE SILENCE at the centre of anti-literature is loud and various. Whether it is created by the shock of outrage or of apocalypse, whether it is enhanced by the conception of literature as pure action or pure play, and of the literary work itself as a concrete object, a blank page, or a random array, is perhaps finally irrelevant. The point is this: silence develops as the metaphor of a new attitude that literature has chosen to adopt towards itself. This attitude puts to question the peculiar power, the ancient excellence, of literary discourse—and challenges the assumptions of our civilisation.

IT IS RATHER PUZZLING that this attitude has failed, on the whole, to make an impression on English and American critics.

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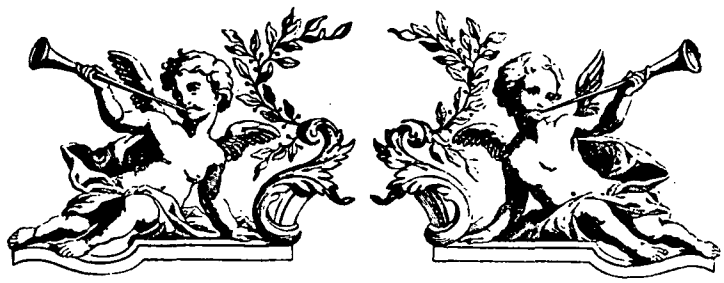
The sensible, practical outlook of the former, and the laborious formalism which still engages the latter may partially account for their antipathy. Moreover, anti-literature tends to unsettle critics with a firm humanistic bent, and to repel others, Marxists or Socialists, who are committed to a certain idea of realism.

French critics, who can be as doctrinaire or provincial as any others, manage to remain the exception. Sartre, we know, reflected at length, in *What Is Literature?*, on the Dadaist and Surrealist crisis of language at the beginning of our century; a decade later, he wrote the introduction to Nathalie Sarraute's *Portrait d'un Inconnu* and spoke "of works, lively yet entirely negative, which might be called anti-novels." Thus a new term was given to the vocabulary of mid-century. In *Le Livre à Venir,* Maurice Blanchot identified Rousseau as the first culprit in the tradition of silence, "raging to write against writing"; and saw literature approaching "the era of wordlessness" which, like some works of Miller and Beckett, can be understood only as incessant sound. Thus, according to Blanchot, literature moves towards its essence, which is disappearance. Likewise, the theme of Roland Barthes' *Le Degré Zéro de L'Ecriture* is absence. "Modernism begins with the search for a literature of impossibility," Barthes proposes; the conclusion to this search is the Orphic dream: "an author without Literature." And Claude Mauriac, who was perhaps the first to include Miller and Beckett in the same critical study, notes in *The New Literature*:

> After the silence of Rimbaud, the blank page of Mallarmé, the inarticulate joy of Artaud, a literature finally dissolves in alliteration with Joyce.... For Beckett... words all say the same thing.

Obviously, the spirit of French lucidity cannot bring itself to rail at silence in literature.

But I suspect that lucidity may no longer be wholly adequate to the ambitions of criticism. We increasingly feel that criticism should do more than clarify; it should also possess wisdom of the senses and of the spirit. We want it to endanger itself, as literature does, and to testify to our condition. We even hope that it can sustain the burden of revelation. This hope has led me to suggest that criticism may have to become apocalyptic before it can compel our sense of relevance. It will have, at the very least, to entertain some sympathy for the metaphors of apocalypse in order to test the intuitions of anti-literature. This is evident in a



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rare piece of American criticism which attempts precisely this task. In "The New Mutants," Leslie Fiedler shows that he understands the complex alliances which the literary imagination now makes with silence, with obscenity, with madness, and even with those post-sexual states akin to mystical trance. He also knows that crucial for our time is

> the sense in which literature first conceived the possibility of the future... and then furnished that future in joyous or terrified anticipation, thus preparing all of us to inhabit it.

ANTI-LITERATURE should finally be seen in the light of particular examples. The examples which seem to me most pertinent to the development of that literature are, once again, those of Miller and Beckett, and perhaps of Burroughs who stands between the two. The contrasts of Miller and Beckett often are obvious. But lest my choice of paradigms may appear curious, let me add a few words about each.

Next to Ezra Pound, Henry Miller is the oldest major American author still living. Unlike Pound, however, Miller sees himself as a patagonian, a literary gangster; and the great modern movement represented by Eliot, Joyce, and Proust remains alien to him. *"Art as the substitute for life,"* he snorts. "The literature of flight, of escape, of a neurosis so brilliant that it almost makes one doubt the efficacy of health"; instead, Miller turns to the hellions of our age: "I owe much to the Dadaists and Surrealists. I prefer the French writers who are un-French." If it is not obvious what Miller owes to the Dadaists, it is clear that he was one of the first writers—Lawrence may be another—to make a break with the tradition of the modern, and to establish an outlook more "schismatic"[1] than any adopted by the literary masters of his day. Every subject Miller touches—art, history, civilisation, religion—is fired by his sense of outrage and transfigured by his hope of apocalypse. "Crime begins with God," Miller says in *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*. "It will end with man, when he finds God again." And in *The Wisdom of the Heart*, he notes:

> All art, I firmly believe, will one day disappear.... The artist who becomes thoroughly aware consequently ceases to be one. And the trend is towards awareness, towards that blinding consciousness in which no present forms of life can possibly flourish, not even art.

Miller, that American transcendentalist of foreign city streets, demands an end to history and hails a transformation of consciousness. His work marks the end of the French Symbolist tradition which made art its religion and therefore contained within itself—witness the example of Rimbaud—the death of art. Miller turns literature into autobiography of a special kind; for his work is less an effort to record and comprehend his life than it is an attempt to *live* it, live it over and over again. Loose patterns of recall to which he delivers himself follow the flux of human experience and respond to its random compulsions. Unable to redeem his life in art, he calls for a transcendence of both. In this sense, Henry Miller may be considered the first author of anti-literature.

Samuel Beckett, on the other hand, tries bravely to be its last. Knowing that art cannot be art nowadays unless it is wrested from impossibility, he comes close to reducing literature to a mathematical tautology. The syllogism of Beckett assumes that history has spent itself; we are merely playing an end game. The syllogism can be relentless. Language has become void; therefore words can only demonstrate their emptiness. Certainty in knowledge is no longer possible; therefore epistemology must become parody. Religion and metaphysics have lost their authority; therefore we shall wait for Godot in vain. Human relations are at bottom cruel; therefore love is a disguise of power and power a disguise of solitude. Decaying matter remains forever alien to the mind; therefore mind and crippled body can have no union.

In this Cartesian nightmare, Beckett leaves only one thing intact: the capacity of human consciousness to reflect upon itself and to entertain its own end. Thus literature becomes the inaudible game of a solipsist. No wonder that Beckett believes art to be the apotheosis of solitude. In this rigorous fidelity to failure, he also reveals the secret tendency of literature to contract into silence. Despite the monstrous endurance of his characters and the deadly skill of his words, Samuel Beckett may be considered the author who wants to seal the lips of the muse. Yet his silence, despite its grim, satiric note, has something in common with the silence of holy men who, after knowing pain and outrage, reach for a peace beyond human understanding. Pronko is probably right when he claims: "Beckett's view of life is basically a religious one: it is the view of a man who seeks some meaning beyond the trivial happenings of everyday life, a purpose beyond the physical needs of a specific time and place."

Miller and Beckett are both comedians of our darkest hopes. Their comic spirit distorts literature in different ways. Miller stretches

[1] The term is Frank Kermode's, who in his article in ENCOUNTER (April, 1966), takes a different view of modernism.

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literature beyond its usual limit and Beckett shrinks it to naught; but expansion and contraction end by serving the same purpose, which is to alter the function of words within any given literary form. This alteration tends towards a state that I have metaphorically called silence. Put another way, silence is the new attitude that literature has chosen to adopt towards itself. Is this attitude really new?

We can recall that Elizabeth Sewell said of Rimbaud and Mallarmé something very close to what I have said of Miller and Beckett: that Rimbaud's language moves towards the disorder of dream and Mallarmé's towards the perfection of number. We cannot be very sure nowadays of what is new. But of this we can be more certain: whether the literature of silence proves a passing fashion or a phase of literary history, it is a judgment of the Western conscience, and of its consciousness, upon ourselves. Lionel Trilling sensed this judgment, somewhat faintly, when he said: "It is possible to say that—whether for good or for bad—we confront a mutation in culture by which an old established proportion between the pleasure-seeking instincts and the ego instinct is being altered in favour of the latter." Trilling's point is that modern literature allies itself increasingly with the death rather than with the pleasure principle. The alliance, as Trilling fails to see, may be in the interests of a new life. Perhaps Durrell is right, after all, when he says in *Balthazar*: "The object of writing is to grow a personality which in the end enables man to transcend art." Perhaps this is the function of silence.

THE FUNCTION OF SILENCE in Burroughs' work is clear. In the opening pages of his latest book, *Nova Express*, Burroughs nastily asks: "What scared you all into time? Into body? Into shit? I will tell you: *'the word.'* Alien Word *'the.' 'The word'* of Alien Enemy imprisons *'thee'* in Time. In Body. In Shit. Prisoner, come out." The framework of his "trilogy," *Naked Lunch, Soft Machine*, and *Nova Express* (another version of this was published in Paris under the title of *The Ticket That Exploded*, 1962), is science fiction, the new map of our hell, the nightmare that our machines dream when they dream of history. A galactic war, spearheaded by Inspector J. Lee (an alias Burroughs once used in writing *Junkie*), is waged to exterminate all Nova Criminals. The latter are controllers or deceivers of life, and their most powerful weapon of all is language, for language *is* deceit and control.

The myth of technology also provides Burroughs with the opportunity to express both

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outrage and apocalypse. The outrage is expressed grossly, fantastically, through "Insect People" and "Vegetable People" who collaborate with death, who invite the void. The apocalypse can be icy (whole planets approaching the Absolute Zero) or explosive (the refrain is always, "Minutes to go"). Obscene idealist, satiric and visionary, lacing scientific jargon with poetic hallucination and cutting up and folding his pages cannily, William Burroughs is finally led to deny not only the Word but also the Flesh. His aim is to make man bodiless and language silent. Utopian or nihilist, he demonstrates the passions that feed both in a form which compels literature to move beyond its accepted limits. If his work does not help to create a new human personality, it forces us to reconsider the traditional terms of literature.

In Burroughs, in Beckett, even in Miller, the destructive capabilities are clear; all three authors serve to hasten the end, and silence is a metaphor of their complex rage. We are tempted to ask, what do they offer when all is unsaid and undone? The question assumes polarities of creation and destruction, affirmation and denial, which the modern experience tends to render obsolete. Camus, and Nietzsche before him—and who else before?—knew that the act of negation is an assertion of value. Men have learned to refuse with honour ever since refusal has required from them, in this era of terror, a monstrous price. The polarities of creation and destruction no longer exclude one another; they exclude the middle. For if silence is holy, and if it brings with it intimations of a whole, new life, silence is also demonic, and it permits old terrors. Outrage and apocalypse are two faces of the same reality; this has been all along my point.

Admitting this final peril, how then can men of good will discern value in the silence which the new literature whispers into our inner ears? The answer depends on whether we can still afford anything but radical solutions. The statement, I know, has sickening echoes; we have heard of radical solutions before which have brought only radical dissolutions. I offer no way out of this perplexity though I claim it is the perplexity we must somehow meet. My hope is that Silence and Love may recover their ancient connection. This is what Norman O. Brown says in *Love's Body*: "The true meanings of words are bodily meanings, carnal knowledge; and the bodily meanings are the unspoken meanings. What is always speaking silently is the body." And again: "The matrix in which the word is sown is silence. Silence is the mother tongue."

Michael Oakeshott's Politics

A Conservative Sceptic — By Maurice Cranston

Michael Oakeshott is a political theorist who does not fit into any of the usual categories; he is a traditionalist with few traditional beliefs, an "idealist" who is more sceptical than many positivists, a lover of liberty who repudiates liberalism, an individualist who prefers Hegel to Locke, a philosopher who disapproves of *philosophisme*, a romantic perhaps (if Hume could also be called one), and a marvellous stylist. Oakeshott's voice is unique. But since what he says has often been misunderstood, and sometimes misrepresented, there was evidently room for an informed and sympathetic commentary such as is now provided by Dr. W. H. Greenleaf in the first of Longmans' new series of "Monographs in Politics."[1]

Dr. Greenleaf's stress is on the continuity of Oakeshott's thought, from the earliest epistemological to the latest political writings. Oakeshott's *Rationalism in Politics*[2] is thus expounded in the light of his *Experience and its Modes*,[3] a book which was published in 1933 when the author was thirty-two. The argument of this early book undoubtedly owes a certain amount to Hegel and to the theory of truth as coherence. In its pages, Oakeshott depicts the philosopher's task as "the perpetual re-establishment of coherence" or the resolution of the inconsistency in any set of concrete images so as to make it more intelligible. Ordinary or common-sense views may be used as a point of departure; but they are adopted only to be superseded. They are

[1] *Oakeshott's Philosophical Politics*. By W. H. Greenleaf. Longmans, 15s.
[2] Methuen, 1962, 35s.
[3] Cambridge University Press, 1933. Reissued, 1966, 60s.

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examined and criticised with the aim of moving beyond them to a more comprehensive perspective. Philosophy, on this view, neither seeks nor desires a stopping place. It is not the construction of a complete system of knowledge, but rather a method or way of thinking. And its objective is nothing more ambitious than intelligibility. Philosophy, for Oakeshott, is explanation.

While Oakeshott may try (in Dr. Greenleaf's words) "to achieve on each question he discusses the most inclusive and concordant view," he does not imagine that such absolute coherence of concrete ideas is ever actually accomplished; this is simply the criterion of whatever is done. Oakeshott notes that men have an incurable tendency to look at the world in ways which, though wholly consistent and self-contained in their own terms, are not fully satisfactory in experience as a whole. Such limited perspectives Oakeshott speaks of as "modes" of experience; each "mode" constructs a specific and homogeneous picture not of a part of the real world but of the whole of experience as it is seen from a given point of interest. Oakeshott sees no theoretical limit to the number of such abstract worlds, but he distinguishes four as being particularly familiar and fully formed: namely those of practice, science, history, and poetry.

Each of these "modes," Oakeshott suggests, has its own validity, but all are in different ways limited, and none is able, in its own terms, to understand its limitations. Only the philsophical perspective is able to transcend the shortcomings of these several "modes," and re-interpret them from the standpoint of experience as a totality. The philosopher seeks to bring out the logical form of each particular "mode" with a view to perceiving "the degree and limitations of the coherence achieved."

Dr. Greenleaf believes that this is the method which Oakeshott applies to the study of politics, so that his first question becomes: what is the principle of coherence to be sought in the interpretation of political activity? Oakeshott considers, and rejects, two well-known ways of characterising political behaviour. First, he repudiates the notion of politics as an *ad hoc* activity of "waking up each morning and considering 'What would I like to do?'... and doing it." For this, he thinks, is to represent politics as something entirely capricious, which it is not. Secondly, he rejects the more exalted and very fashionable belief that politics is an activity which may be guided by an independently premeditated plan or set of principles. Some of the most telling, and often quoted, passages in Oakeshott's writings are directed against this vision of politics. It is the one that he likes to call "rationalist."

Since the word "rationalism" has several meanings, it is hardly surprising that these arguments of Oakeshott have been misunderstood. He is certainly not attacking Reason. He is criticising rather a kind of intellectualism or what he has sometimes called *philosophisme*. "The Rationalist," writes Oakeshott, "is like a shopkeeper who, having bought an estate, thinks that a correspondence course in estate management will give him all the knowledge necessary to control it and its tenancy." The kind of rationalist Oakeshott has in mind is the man who thinks he can apply intellectual blueprints to the world of politics, who imagines he can solve concrete problems by the light of abstract generalisations, and who seeks, in effect, to introduce into politics the method of the *polytechnicien* or engineer.

Against such belief in the sovereignty of technique, Oakeshott insists on the importance of practical knowledge, which is largely traditional knowledge. He likens the art of politics to that of cookery. "A cook," he writes, "is not a man who first has a vision of a pie, and then tries to make it; he is a man skilled in cookery, and both his projects and his achievements spring from that skill." Political understanding comes as a result of being apprenticed to, participating in, and thereby "comprehending all the resources of a tradition of behaviour."

It must be said that Oakeshott's analogy between politics and cookery sounds rather odd (though Dr. Greenleaf does not seem to think so). Plato and other Greeks likened the politician to the flute player, which is surely a better analogy. If politics is an art, it is one of the performing arts, one in which speech, oratory, rhetoric, persuasion play a very large part. And indeed Oakeshott sees this plainly enough when he goes on to define politics. He defines it as "activity and utterance connected with government and the instruments of government" or, in a famous phrase, "the activity of attending to the general arrangements of a set of people whom chance or choice has brought together." Any group may have its politics, but we use the word primarily in connection with those associations known as states. Like all procedures among men, Oakeshott suggests, the rules and institutions of states are most useful when they are familiar and do not alter excessively. Not that Oakeshott sees anything sacrosanct in such rules and institutions; all are "susceptible of change and improvement." But such possible improvements, he argues, are prompted neither by caprice nor by abstract principles, but derive from the recognition of specific

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and ascertainable defects in what already obtains. Thus political activity is a matter of "amending existing arrangements to make them more coherent."

An example Oakeshott takes from recent history is the enfranchisement of women in England. He suggests that this was not enacted because Parliament recognised any natural or human right to equality of suffrage, but because Englishwomen had already, as a result of the Married Women's Property Act and of various war-time changes, become by 1918 on the same footing as Englishmen in so many other fields that it was anomalous, or inconsistent, for them to remain excluded from the voting register; their enfranchisement was a result of Parliament's recognition of "an incoherence which pressed convincingly for remedy."

All politics, as Oakeshott understands it, is "the politics of repair." The enterprise of politics is

> to make use of the *strongest*, and not merely the *highest* human impulses in a continuous attempt to correct ascertainable mischiefs and to suppress actual malpractices in society, but without turning either the mischiefs or their cure into abstract principles, and without being led away by the illusory project of establishing permanent justice in the world. For such a view, politics is the art of the statesman (the art of choosing the least evil of the available courses of action), and not the rationalism of the social engineer, the supposed science of perfecting human society.

This emphasis of Oakeshott's on the "politics of repair" and on statesmanship as "choosing the least evil" has prompted some readers to see him as another Edmund Burke. But this is a mistake. Burke, like most conservative political theorists, is a champion of the Christian Order, of Natural Law, of the Right to Property, and so forth. Oakeshott, who carries the scepticism of his philosophy into his politics, has no belief in such metaphysical abstractions. His kindred spirit is not Burke, but David Hume. Like Hume, Oakeshott is conservative as a result of his doubt. Hume relied on tradition, habit and custom precisely because he could see nothing else to rely on: no God, no Natural Law, no Rights. But Hume did not make the mistake of elevating custom and tradition into sacred substitutes for God and Natural Law. His sceptical conservatism was open, undogmatic, and splendidly tolerant.

THIS IS EQUALLY TRUE of Oakeshott's conservatism. Opposed to all ideology, he cannot, and does not, share the ideological conservatism of Burke and his successors. This attitude which is required by Oakeshott's theory is clearly also part of his natural disposition. No one can read his writings without being struck by his manifest devotion to freedom. And whatever his debt to Hegel in other fields, Oakeshott owes nothing to Hegel in his understanding of what freedom is. Oakeshott's notion of freedom is the plain man's, or rather the plain Englishman's, notion. Freedom is something to be defended against the régime and against any other great concentration of power. And although Oakeshott has sometimes criticised forms of theoretical individualism, his freedom is the freedom of the individual. This is made strikingly clear in an essay of his which has never been published in England but which deserves to be better known: "The Masses in Representative Democracy."[4] In this essay he introduces the concept of the "anti-individual." "The 'masses' as they appear in modern European history," Oakeshott writes, "are not composed of individuals, they are composed of 'anti-individuals' united in revulsion from individuality."

The main argument of the essay is that freedom, as Englishmen understand it, is something that emerged in medieval times with the sense of individuality. Individuality demanded a government strong enough to enable the individual to escape from communal or other established pressures, a government which could maintain order and create new rights and duties appropriate to the interests of individuality, but which at the same time was not so powerful that it would itself constitute a new threat to those interests. Legislative bodies arose to make laws favourable to the individual, and establish spheres of private activities (or liberties) in which the individual could act without interference:

> In this condition [Oakeshott writes] every subject was secured of the right to pursue his chosen directions of activity as little hindered as might be by his fellows or by the exactions of government itself, and as little distracted by communal pressures. Freedom of movement, of initiative, of speech, of belief and religious observance, of association and dissociation, of bequest and inheritance, security of person and property; the right to choose one's own occupation and dispose of one's labour and goods; and over all the "rule of law"; the right to be ruled by a known law, applicable to all subjects alike. And these rights, appropriate to individuality, were not the privileges of a single class; they were the property of every subject alike. Each signified the abrogation of some feudal privilege.

On this view, government acted like an umpire, administering the rules of the game without taking part, intervening only to settle col-

[4] *Freedom and Serfdom*, ed. A. Hunold (Dordecht, Holland, 1961).

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lisions of interest among the players. And such is the chief characteristic of what Oakeshott speaks of as "parliamentary government."

The rise of the "anti-individual," he argues, goes together with another view of government: what Oakeshott calls "popular" (as opposed to "parliamentary") government. The popular system looks to the establishment of universal adult suffrage to confirm the authority of mere numbers or the mass man; the parliamentary representative is seen, not as an individual, but as an instructed delegate whose function is to assist the creation of a society appropriate to his masters; mass parties grow up composed of "anti-individuals" and dominated by their leaders. But in all this the mass man does not make his own choice; he does not really give a mandate to his leaders. The so-called representative draws up his own mandate and "by a familiar trick of ventriloquism" puts it into the mouths of his electors. Similarly, the favourite device of "popular" government, the plebiscite, is not a method by which the mass man imposes his choices upon his rulers; it is a method of generating a government with unlimited authority to make choices on his behalf. Through the plebiscite, the mass man finally achieves release from the burden of individuality: he is told emphatically what to choose. Oakeshott adds that the style of general political discourse most suited to "popular" (as opposed to "parliamentary") government tends naturally to be the idiom of ideology or, as he calls it, rationalism.

Oakeshott's belief in the superiority of the parliamentary form of government goes together with his special feeling for England: his sense (as Dr. Greenleaf puts it) "of the greatness and uniqueness of the British political achievement and way of life generally." Oakeshott has more than once spoken of the English system as "the most civilised and effective method of social integration ever created by mankind (for it is not the gift of the Gods)." But while Dr. Greenleaf is right, I think, in noticing this patriotic sentiment in Oakeshott, I suspect that he goes wrong in placing Oakeshott's general theory in a distinctively English tradition of political philosophy. Oakeshott is surely not, as Dr. Greenleaf suggests, the successor of T. H. Green, B. Bosanquet, and F. H. Bradley in the English Idealist school. Green, in particular, is an example of the high-minded ideologue (or Balliol *philosophe*) that Oakeshott most mistrusts. Oakeshott's "Hegelianism" comes straight from Hegel without any mediation from Victorian Oxford. Oakeshott's affinities are altogether closer to several continental theorists, to Wilhelm Dilthey, for example, and Benedetto Croce. And it is interesting to notice

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that just as Croce, who always reckoned himself a liberal, proved when it came to the test surprisingly conservative, so Oakeshott, the professed conservative, turns out to be remarkably liberal. Not, of course, *a* liberal in the pejorative sense in which he himself uses that word; but liberal (or "libertarian" as he would rather have it), in the sense of one who loves freedom for the sake of freedom. Dr. Greenleaf goes so far as to call him a Whig, but this strikes me as the wrong word. The aristocratic element is there, assuredly; Oakeshott is conspicuously non-bourgeois. But he has so little affection for the leading Whigs, and he rejects so decidedly the central Whig doctrine of Rights, that the name sounds oddly incongruous.

More seriously, I think it must be said in criticism of Dr. Greenleaf's monograph that its very title is out of place. What can "Oakeshott's Philosophical Politics" mean, when it is a central point of Oakeshott's argument that philosophy and politics are distinct and categorically different? Politics, if Oakeshott's understanding is correct, cannot be philosophical, although there can be philosophy of politics. Again, for all the emphasis that Dr. Greenleaf places on the continuity of Oakeshott's thought, he does not really explore the logical connections between Oakeshott's different writings; he may even prompt the conjecture that if Oakeshott had been a literary man, and not a philosopher, he would still have had the same political views and defended them in the manner of Montaigne. To concentrate, as Dr. Greenleaf does, on Oakeshott's politics is to miss something of Oakeshott's great distinction, which resides in the fact that he *is* a philosopher. This, however, is not something to be unfolded in a book of a hundred pages, or appraised in a review of a dozen paragraphs. There is a lot to be learned from contemplating Michael Oakeshott in the role of the sceptical conservative, but it would be a mistake to think of this as his most important role.

The Last English Imagist

On Sir Herbert Read — By G. S. Fraser

The first collected volume of Sir Herbert Read's poems that I remember buying was that of 1935. What one noticed then was that this was essentially a poet of the family of Pound in his Imagist phase and of Eliot in that early phase which might be called Impressionist. In rhythm, in economy, in choice of words, this is very like Pound:

Like a faun my head uplifted
in delicate mists:

And breaking on my soul
tremulous waves that beat and cling
to yellow leaves and dark green hills:

Bells in the autumn evening.

This is very like Pound in tea-shops, in South Kensington, and like the short poems about damp souls of housemaids and so on in which Eliot was much influenced by Pound:

In this teashop
they seem so violent
Why should they come here
dressed for tragedy?

Did they anticipate
This genteel atmosphere?
Her eyes are like moth-wings
furtive under a black arch.

She drinks a cup of tea.
But he is embarrassed—
stretches his gross neck
out of the white grip of his collar.

Sits uneasily
eagerly rises now she has done.
Anxiously seeks the looking glass
then seeks the door.

She is gone
a vestal her robes fluttering
like a printed sheet
in a gusty Tube.

The poise and concentration of the second poem, particularly the rhythm which, by suggesting detachment and withdrawal avoids melodrama and sentimentality, a detachment and withdrawal heightened by the formal diction, and word order, "genteel," "furtive," "eagerly rises," "anxiously seeks," the felicity of the two similes (the eyes like moth-wings under a black arch, which is her eyebrow, but also a smoke-blackened archway under which moths might gather; the dress, a print dress probably, like a printed sheet in a gusty Tube, a newspaper in the underground, but also a sheet carried by suction down a long tubular corridor), all these things catch a particular

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moment, with admirable precision. Exercises in quatrains recall, also, Eliot's quatrains in *Poems 1920* and the formal Gautierian poem at the end of *Mauberley*. "Formal Incantation" is a beautiful exercise in what Pound called *logopoeia*. The words seem to be about to betray their dignity in mock-heroics but reclaim it in the pride of formality:

O watery sun decline
Defame the obdurate day
Or the ashen slaves of Phoebus
Will find me with a golden key

And bid me unlock the casket laid
Beneath the crumbling stairs
Where Jason's fleece awaits the day
Medea's art recurs.

The pianola's notes resound
Through the damp rain-sodden rooms
And I have naught I can repress
Against the anguish of the herbal flames

That flicker in the near zone
Of Hecate's naked plight.
O triune grace, I will not miss
Thee at the closure of the night.

It was to such well-remembered early poems that I found myself turning, with great pleasure, on opening this latest and perhaps last version of Sir Herbert's *Collected Poems*.[1] The last of the three poems I have quoted struck me, in particular, as having an individuality of movement and tone that made it basically unlike what Pound and Eliot were doing at the same time, or had been doing a little earlier; the French poet of whom one seems to catch an aftertaste in "Formal Incantation" is, for instance, neither Laforgue nor Gautier but Mallarmé, a poet whom Pound dislikes, and of whom it is difficult to trace much in Eliot. It is a poem, so to say, which does not need paraphrase and yet resists exposition. In this anti-analytical approach to some of his poetry one would have Sir Herbert on one's side. He has an exceedingly interesting prose note at the end of these poems, rejecting the analytic approach, called: "What is a poem?"

Mrs. Susanne Langer, it appears, kept asking Sir Herbert that question at a Princeton seminar where he was discussing the much easier question of what is poetry. A poem, or any work of art, is not an open-ended thing, but exists by observing certain structural limitations. Yet it can observe these, and not be satisfactory, not be a "real" work of art or poem. In the true poem, we recognise a certain proper and natural completeness, which Sir Herbert has often described, metaphorically or analogically, as "organic form." The poet, Sir Herbert thinks, cannot plan this proper and natural completeness in advance but its presence or absence in a poem can be recognised by the presence or absence of rhythmic vitality. (I was reminded here of a remark of Empson's once to me, I think derived originally from I. A. Richards, that a convincing rhythm is the one element in a true poem which a clever non-poet cannot fake up.) This "organic form," of which the touchstone is rhythm, can be felt in some way to fit the "content" of a poem but this content is not the sense of the poem, as paraphrasable in prose, but an "essence" (I think rather in Santayana's sense), conveyed by verbal signs, that "vanishes the moment we approach it with our analytical intelligence." Poetic language, in other words, is presentational rather than dis-

[1] *Collected Poems*. By Herbert Read. Faber and Faber, 30s.

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cursive, though I suppose, in the light of that fine poem, "Moon's Farm," that Sir Herbert might agree that poetic language can present an image of the "feel" of intimate, ruminative discourse.

The poetic moment, for Sir Herbert, is a "mysterious" moment, to be silently recognised rather than talked about. What I admired particularly about this prose postscript was the silent courtesy with which all the work that has been done in the close examination of the short poem over the last forty years, Richards, Empson, Leavis, Cleanth Brooks, Warren, Tate, Ransom, Wimsatt, Beardsley, and all the others, is not attacked head-on but quietly set aside as irrelevant. Poetry, for Sir Herbert, is not a way of saying things, even a round-about way. It is a heresy, for him, to think of the language of poetry as part of a continuum which includes the language of prose and everyday speech. "True poetry was never speech but song." I take it that this again is an analogical or metaphorical statement: he does not literally mean that Shakespeare's *Othello* became true poetry only as Verdi's *Otello*. The poem is something self-contained, impenetrable, "complete in itself, unanalysable, irrefragable."

It is easy enough to say that, if this is true, my activity here and now in these columns is a somewhat futile one, and so has been that of Sir Herbert in many long essays about poetry. I think it is perfectly true that in nearly all acts of critical discourse one does arrive at a stage where one can only point at a kind of dumb core, in the work of art, of self-identity and say something like, "There, now!" or, "You see!" But the same thing is true of the acts of critical discourse of historians, biographers, novelists about real or fictive human beings. Critical talk is at its best a kind of talking around, that can never make the final dumb core of self-identity transparent; but it can lead us towards confronting the core. As with Nirvana, on Santayana's view, there is something to be said for a long way round to the Ineffable.

Sir Herbert sees that good poets *have* adopted the "ambiguous roles" of "philosophical or social critic or entertainer," but insists they take a risk, or deflect attention from the proper nature of poetry, in doing so. Poetry is essentially "a manifestation of *being*," or, in a phrase of Heidegger's, "the saga of the unconcealment of what is." And finally, in this postscript, Sir Herbert names his mentors, Hulme, Flint, Pound, H.D., Eliot, Marianne Moore, William Carlos Williams. His roots are in the Imagist tradition, even if Imagism never became a fully coherent poetics. The poets whom he names as his mentors have written, he thinks, "the only certainly perdurable poems of our century." Other poets who might have written a perdurable poem or two, like Yeats and Frost, have been influenced by their example, Yeats in his "later work," Frost in his "best work."

THE ODDITY OF THIS LIST of those who have written "the only certainly perdurable poems of this century" does suggest the weakness or fragmentariness, as a guide to judgment in poetry, of the whole Imagist tradition from which Sir Herbert derives. Eliot is a great poet, a deep one, but compared to some other poets of equal greatness—compared to Yeats, say—narrow in the range of his moods and the repertoire of his images; nor does he seem to be a poet who can be discussed satisfactorily in abstraction from his meanings, the beliefs and attitudes which his poems convey. Ezra Pound is a great poetic influence, has written great poems and passages of poetry, but has more failures of ordinary human understanding and sympathy, is more flawed and uneven, than almost any poet of equal importance one can think of. Miss Moore has a very distinct and individual but, I would have thought, also very limited talent. William Carlos Williams is perhaps a very important poet but good English critics, like Christopher Ricks, have found it impossible to hear his voice or catch his drift. Hulme wrote a dozen or so tiny poems, some of which are very vivid and striking. H.D. is the best early Imagist poet, perhaps just because her intensely alive but slight and narrow gift does not strain against the limitations of Imagism. F. S. Flint is important in the history of Imagism, but I have not found one poem of his that strikes me as wholly successful, even by the narrowest standards of Imagism itself. Sir Herbert, Wordsworthian though he is, seems to have forgotten the Wordsworthian notion of the poet as "a man speaking to men." Hardy, Yeats, Frost, Stevens, Ransom, Lowell, to take half a dozen names at random, have surely as great a technical gift, outside the Imagist tradition, and a far wider human interest, than at least four, perhaps than at least five of Sir Herbert's mentors. Can we ignore the relevance of poetry, its appeal to the widest interests and sympathies?

AND EVEN AS a technical theory has not Imagism very distinct limitations? Sir Herbert has a statement which has a humour which may or may not be, I am not certain, fully conscious:

> The modern poet, with few exceptions, writes poetry as if he were taking his Muse for a walk

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and gives up when he feels tired or falls behind his Muse.

This is a strange figure (what would Graves say?) of the Muse as one's loyal sturdy dog, and as a generalisation about the best modern poems it is untrue. Many famous modern poems—"*Le Cimetière Marin*," "Easter, 1916," "The Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket," to take some examples at random—are masterpieces of construction. But this strange remark points to one of the weaknesses of one aspect of the Imagist tradition, the insistence on free verse, or the glorification of rhythm as against metre. Unlike the traditional English metres, particularly the iambic line, free verse cannot, except in the most expert hands, be modulated up to a climax. In a long poem it tends to become very lumpish and monotonous. The Imagist tradition, also, embodies no theory of rhetoric, or of appropriate diction. Here, from an early poem, is an example of these dangers:

The ghastly desolation
Sank into men's hearts and turned them black—
Cankered them with horror.
Kneeshaw felt himself
A cog in some great evil engine,
Unwilling, but revolv'd tempestously,
By unseen springs.
He plunged with listless mind
Into the black horror.

The rhythmic movement does seem dull and inexpressive to me there and that impression is reinforced by the rhetorically trite diction: "ghastly desolation," "unseen springs," "listless mind," "black horror." There is not enough spring, push, change of pace. One is reminded of Robert Frost's description of free verse as playing tennis without a net. The passage would be all right as a sincere, rhetorical, generalising prose passage—preceding actual presentation—in a novel. "Revolv'd," with that spelling is a mannerism which Sir Herbert frequently uses in printing past participles ("accomplish'd," "scarr'd"). The apostrophe for the *e* has a point in seventeenth-century poems, where the "*-ed*" in past participles could be fully pronounced. Since we never pronounce it today—except, of course, in words where the physical mechanism of speech forces us to pronounce it: *hated, slated, waited,* and so on —this trick of Sir Herbert's seems merely a device to make his page look poetical; and it is typical of a certain slightly arbitrary artificiality of presentation and diction which often makes us uncertain of his tone.

This is a carping way, however, to write about a poet whose fine integrity of spirit shows itself

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even in his loyalty to a poetics which one thinks inadequate. All his life as a poet (one poem, supposed to be written by the younger brother of a famous Chinese poet almost admits this) Sir Herbert must have felt himself a little overshadowed by his mentors, Pound and Eliot. His choice of words, his handling of rhythm, his concentrations of feeling are never, even at their very best, as *exciting* as those of Eliot and Pound; he is the loyal disciple. But there is in his poetry a quality quite his own, a quality which he would not admit to be a poetic quality at all, a Wordsworthian staunchness and sturdiness of character. There is a splendid inner calm in his poetry, he is undramatic, in a hysterical age he refuses to give way to hysteria. The moral tone of two poems written in time of war, "A Song for the Spanish Anarchists" and "To A Conscript of 1940" seems to me more sanely and generously poised than that of any other poems coming out of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War. There is a growth, too, in technical mastery. The free verse of "Moon's Farm," beautifully modulated to the speaking voice, is a very great advance on the free verse of "Kneeshaw Goes to War" and this whole poem conveys the sense of a patiently earned wisdom. And the Imagist tradition has at least kept the eye innocent to the end:

Rain-filled ruts
reflect
an apple-green sky

Into black huts
a shawled woman
shoos her hissing geese

A cold wind
insinuates
the evening star

Black thorns
and wassail berries
hide the sweet thrush

The old poet of these lines is at one with the young poet of these paragraphs from a prose poem:

The ducks waddle in the mud and sail in circles round the pond, or preen their feathers on the bank.

But in summer the pond is dry, and its bed is glossy and baked by the sun, a beautiful soft colour like the skins of the moles they catch and crucify on the stable doors.

To the innocent eye all things are true and beautiful, a contained world. In the end I think the Yorkshire farm of his childhood did more for this poet, set more of a permanent seal on him, than any number of Imagist Manifestos. So much of his age, in his prose work, in his fluent accommodation to innovating ideas, Sir Herbert is at his best, both in prose and verse, when we become aware of a peaceful inward self-containment which the age has hardly touched. In this sane and true poetry there is no self-torture, no near-break in control, no *angst*, no vergings on madness. The unexcitingness is precisely, in the long run, the tonic quality.

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FROM THE POINT OF VIEW *of the community the only justification of the intellectual is that he persists, under the stress of circumstances, in being a free, conscious, reasoning individual when others lose themselves in the crowd. The duty that no intellectual can shirk without degrading himself is the duty to expose fictions and to refuse to call "useful lies," truths. To accomplish this duty, it is not necessary for him to think that he possesses the truth. The will to question can suffice.*

NICOLA CHIAROMONTE

THE TROUBLE *with the Westerner in the East is that he has been conditioned to error. Like one of Pavlov's dogs he hears a bell and reacts, but the whole thing may be only a trap, and he only an innocent victim. I kept on hearing bells in Japan, and was constantly betrayed. I saw a woman beyond a bamboo fence fondling a child, and I felt at once that this could not simply be mother-love, but must rather be some form of the hierarchical sentiment which prevails between the old and the young. When a newspaper editor told me of his troubles and stated passionately his determination to resist any encroachments on his journalistic independence, I suspected immediately that this was not truly a matter of democratic feeling for a free press but only a polite Japanese adaptation to the posture he thought I would like to have him take. For, we are told, out there is Eastern reality, and here our Western eyes, and they never meet at the point of an observed truth but only in distortion and misunderstanding. Without being able to help myself I came to call a thing strange where it was merely simple and obvious.*

MELVIN J. LASKY

BEFORE THE ECONOMIC NEEDS *of people express themselves in political action, a mental process intervenes; and this mental process, as often as not, initiates action directly opposed to the original need. The optimistic thinkers of the 19th century thought that, by and large, the actions of the masses coincided with their interests; the 20th century reminded us that even highly civilised people like the Germans are capable of committing collective suicide, driven by some neurotic obsession, and regardless of economic reality.*

Politicians are supposed to have a smattering of history and economics; it is time they were obliged to learn the elements of psychology, and to study the strange mental forces which compel people to act with such stubborn determination against their proper interests.

ARTHUR KOESTLER

EVERY TIME OF DISORDER *is also a time of disordered minds who know all about God and the world, the cause of things and their background, the meaning of history and the destiny of man—all about everything except themselves. And in such times nothing is more necessary than to come, in the spiritual and even in the clinical sense, to oneself. That is the spiritual hygiene Montaigne practised as his joyful wisdom, and his only teaching. "With him I would live," Nietzsche wrote, "if the task were set me to make myself at home on earth." It is just this task, perhaps, that we have all been set again.*

HERBERT LUETHY

THOUGH THERE IS *a traditional element in all civilised art, and though Shakespeare and Milton are "eclectic" in no small measure, nevertheless there is a directness and originality about all "eternal" works of art: the myth is used as a paradigm or as an archetype, not as an exotic mine to be exploited. As for escapism, there is no compromise possible on this issue: to escape from life is to escape from art.*

HERBERT READ

MOST PEOPLE NOWADAYS *seem to think that one brand of pernicious nonsense can only be combatted by another equally pernicious. If you find a man who thinks that two and two are five, you do not attempt to persuade him that two and two are four, because that would be an appeal to cold reason which is never strong enough to combat passion. You attempt instead to persuade him that two and two are six; and you are quite likely to succeed by means of schools and congressional committees, or labour camps and brain-washing, according to your longitude.*

BERTRAND RUSSELL

CONSERVATISM *has fought a losing battle all the time, from Coleridge to T. S. Eliot; it wanted to save a culture based on classes but all it could do was to make us conscious of its loss.*

GOLO MANN

THE ONLY LITERARY MOVEMENTS *worthy of respect are those made by the young who think themselves the greatest geniuses who ever lived, and who are convinced that everything else being written, and nearly everything else that has been written, is worthless.*

STEPHEN SPENDER

QUOTED WITHOUT COMMENT:

O! these ENCOUNTERERS, *so glib of tongue,*
that give a coasting welcome ere it comes,
And wide unclasp the tables of their thoughts
To every tickling reader, set them down
for sluttish spoils of opportunity
And daughter of the game.

(Troilus and Cressida, *Act IV, Scene 5*)

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LETTERS

L. B. Namier

In my article on Lewis Namier, published in your November 1966 issue, I attempted to describe Namier's reaction to a version which appeared in a gossip column in one of the Beaverbrook newpapers characteristic comment on abstract theorising, which he had made in a private letter to me. I assumed (and so did Namier) that the ultimate source of this information was our common friend, Mr. E. H. Carr, and said so in my article (page 40, paragraph 9).

Mr. Carr has now assured me that my assumption was wholly mistaken. Since I can well imagine what I myself would have felt if I had been charged with communicating the contents of a private letter, however harmless, to a newspaper, I realise how much and how justly this must have annoyed Mr. Carr. I am therefore happy to exonerate him from all responsibility in this matter, and to add that I am extremely sorry not to have checked the facts with him, and consequently, to have caused him embarrassment.

The culprit remains unknown, and the matter is not worth pursuing.

Isaiah Berlin

The City University,
New York

Wesker's "House"

As to whether or not you have laid hold of culture fit either for the many or for the few depends upon whether your creative efforts can use the artistic material, which is pretty well all the material available, to make a valid form capable of some endurance.

This is the affair of the artist whether he be playwright, sculptor, or architect. It is also the affair of the politician and of any that will assume the burden of thought or feel taxed to create form out of disorder. The artist is not the only person concerned with the generation of a culture, but as science and technology can, I think, do little further to help us without the enrichment of an intuitive methodology, for this and for the same reason that modern bread has to be fortified, the artist becomes more than ever necessary.

Even so, he remains a fructifying additive so long as we continue to run a mechanic civilisation whether it be capitalist or socialist. The machine is unfriendly to art and all eccentricity as it is friendly to mass and all that goes with it. How to place human restraints upon its appetites is the problem of all who value the good life. Will Mr. Wesker please write another play.

E. Maxwell Fry

London

Liddell Hart's "Churchill"

Winston Churchill, with his characteristic puckish foresight, took no chances that he would be underestimated by posterity. Having lived the role of Churchill to its fullest, he also went to great pains to formulate the Churchill myth: his history of the second war is a magnificent brief *ex parte* and he even took the trouble to design his own funeral.

It is thus quite understandable that a reaction should occur, particularly in intellectual circles where egotism—at least in others—is considered to be bad form. But while Mr. Goronwy Rees and Mr. Kenneth Young [Encounter, November 1965 and February 1966] are circling on such vital issues as the "unpleasant" characters of Beaverbrook and Birkenhead, the material from Lord Moran's diaries and the essay by B. H. Liddell Hart [Encounter, April 1966] seems to me to provide a far more substantial basis for (to use Walton Hamilton's fine phrase) promoting Churchill from immortality to mortality.

Liddell Hart's critique strikes me as extraordinarily perceptive, but there is one paragraph which seems to me misplaced. Churchill was the absolute master of retrospective symmetry, and it almost seems as though Sir Basil has fallen under his influence when he states:

> "By putting an oil stranglehold on [Japan, Roosevelt] overcame her leaders' reluctance to engage in a fight with the U.S.A. and drove them to strike back.... Once Japan was at war with the U.S.A., Hitler could not avoid supporting his ally."

This strikes me as a highly debatable proposition. The United States was in 1941 riven over the question of intervention in foreign wars in a fashion which makes the current dispute over Viet Nam look like a garden party. Suppose the Japanese had simply struck at the British and Dutch possessions in the Far East? The oil stranglehold would have been eliminated, and F.D.R. would have been in the politically tenuous position of calling for an *attack* on Japan in the interests of "colonialism." Walter Lippmann would undoubtedly have argued that Malaya and the Dutch Indies were a "natural" Japanese sphere of influence (as he earlier had disposed of China), and the Senate would have echoed with the sentiment: "Let the British fight their own selfish battles." The Japanese solved Roosevelt's dilemma at Pearl Harbour—but they did not have to.

In the same fashion, Hitler's declaration of war on the United States was an act of insanity. He did not have to support his ally any more than his ally was supporting him, say, *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union. Once the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbour, the perfect Nazi tactic would have been to lie low and let American fury vent itself in the Pacific. Even *after* the Nazis declared war on the U.S., the Europe first strategy had rough going inside the American government; can one imagine how difficult it would have been had the Japanese been the only declared enemy?

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Therefore to say that, with the attack on Pearl Harbour, Roosevelt "achieved his purpose" of coming to the rescue of Britain is to assign far too high a level of rationality to events of incredible complexity and to give to F.D.R. a positive role in a situation where the eventual successful outcome was largely determined by the egregious blunders of Hitler and the Japanese.

JOHN P. ROCHE
Brandeis University,
Massachusetts

Oxford Unreformed

The Uses of Abuses — By C. D. DARLINGTON

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD has lately received a heavy treatment of its difficulties from a Commission of Inquiry. I believe, however, that a lighter discussion will take us much further, especially if we begin, as the University itself is accustomed to begin, by looking backwards.

In the course of 700 years the government of the University has been taken over by the Colleges whose strength has grown with their endowments. These endowments have been bestowed by rich men who hoped in this way to preserve their memory as benefactors of learning. The flow of such endowments declined 300 years ago but, by the use of modern methods, it has now been restored and for some time has reached a level of about one million pounds per annum.

Following the Industrial Revolution, an episode with which neither the University nor the Colleges claim any connection, a second source of wealth began to flow into the Colleges in the form of income. An education at Oxford appealed to a new class of rich and well-to-do men who wished to use it to improve the prospects of their sons. The Colleges were now therefore able to charge fees proportionate to the social advantages likely to accrue, and a developing social stratification further enhanced their economic divergence.

At the same time the Public Schools set about converting their organisation to connect the supply of well-to-do boys with the demand from appropriate Colleges. The Colleges provided the masters needed for these schools if the schools were to train the boys the Colleges needed as Scholars and, later, as Fellows. Since the tutors in the Colleges nominated their successors from their own pupils a self-propagating cycle was established. And since the Colleges prospered by expanding the subjects of instruction and the objects of recreation which they themselves required from the schools the whole system became highly conservative: it moved very slowly and hardly needed to move at all.

PROFESSOR C. D. DARLINGTON, *the distinguished biologist, is a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and a past President of the British Genetical Society. Among his works are* Darwin's Place in History (*1959*) *and* Genetics and Man (*1964*).

THIS WORLD OF ARRESTED ADOLESCENCE still lives on in Oxford. But in the year 1919 it encountered another kind of world. It was a world with a new economic basis; a world of movement. The changes required by this movement were opposed by some but certain advantages were opposed by others. The crux of the matter was that, side by side with private endowments and private fees, public money was now coming into the University. First, it came as income for teachers to develop subjects beyond the reach or capacity of College tuition. Secondly, it came as capital for new buildings for these teachers to work in. And thirdly, it came as fees paid to the Colleges, on their socially stratified scales, and on behalf of pupils in two new categories: these were undergraduates selected for university training by education authorities and post-graduates selected by national research councils.

Each of these categories of pupils brought a new source of revenue to the Colleges but each also brought its own source of embarrassment. Each had to be connected somehow or other with the tutorial Fellows of the Colleges. Now these Tutors had usually been elected early in life by their predecessors. They expected to stay in their posts, without taking any further academic hurdle, for forty years, governing the college, distributing its patronage, accepting or excluding applicants for admission to the College and the University, and in the course of time nominating their successors, who are 86 per cent Oxford, and electing their Masters, who are 100 per cent Oxford.

When this particular forty years after 1919 had passed, however, it was noticed that one-third of the teaching staff of the University had never been elected Fellows of any College: they were outside the happy self-propagating circle. They were people largely from strange universities and working in strange departments—receiving 25s. an hour as tutors while the Fellows in addition to their perquisites, privileges, and patronage were getting 96s.

Further, it was noticed that some Science Departments were wholly staffed by these outside people; they had few or no Tutorial Fellows in the Colleges. This now meant that while buildings had been put up at the public expense to teach certain subjects in the University, candidates for admission wanting to study these subjects would be told to go to another university. Thus it happened that Science Departments at Oxford have been filled

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or emptied, usually emptied, by the decisions of Tutors in the Colleges who are quite specifically ignorant of the subject concerned, Tutors in duty bound to their own subjects, their own schools, and sometimes their own friends.

To remove the reproach of this abuse there are now in process of being set up new Graduate Colleges. Into these it is hoped to shunt the hitherto excluded teaching staff. But they will continue to be excluded from control over the admission of undergraduates into the Departments in which they teach. The new Colleges will thus be academic sidings, perpetuating and stabilising the abuse they are ostensibly designed to correct.

The second source of embarrassment has been the problem of post-graduate students in the sciences. These were at first regarded by the Colleges as an impertinent intrusion into the care-free life of an adolescent university. Conversely, to the students themselves, often coming from other universities, and selected for their maturity, the Colleges seemed an impertinent intrusion: their lives were necessarily centred in the Science Departments which entirely provided for their supervision. Nevertheless the Colleges discovered that they could charge fees, dues, taxes and subscriptions to these graduates on the traditional undergraduate scales. And (how fortunate!) the graduates themselves did not usually complain of this extortion since the Science Research Councils, using the ratepayers' money, and having presumably notified a complaisant Treasury, paid up.

These fees have been increased with the passage of time. When I last surveyed them they varied with the social status and bursarial appetite of the College from £18 to £127 per head per annum. But the services rendered both for high and for low payments were equally non-existent. Thus the nation has been taxed by the Colleges for the right to use the Science Departments which the nation itself has built. And the total amount of tax paid under this heading has amounted since 1945 to about half a million pounds.

The pursuit of money, public or private money, in other Universities might seem to be an alternative, a less creditable alternative, to the pursuit of learning. Not so for the Oxford Colleges. For them apparently it leads to the most creditable of all ends, the ownership of property. Thus the Oxford Commission of Inquiry argues that the ownership of property offers an "incentive on a college to increase its income by its own efforts." In these circumstances it is not surprising that the City and the University of Oxford have been developed by the efforts of the richer Colleges on the lines of competing real property companies. Nor that, at the same time, libraries have been maintained by the efforts of the poorer colleges in collecting from the pocket-money of their state-paid scholars. Nor, finally, that the Commission of Inquiry itself recommends that the number of fee-paying post-graduate students should by the efforts of all the Colleges be speedily doubled.

The faults of the Oxford system, lying as it does at the centre of our educational apparatus, have for some time been seen to constitute a danger to the country as a whole. This is recognised inside as well as outside the University. It is widely believed that a university (even an international university) based on twenty or thirty independent profit-making corporations is becoming unworkable. It is also widely believed that the College tutorial system, with its elaborate organisation and narrow resources, is bound to give place to a mature form of co-operation between institutes properly equipped and staffed and with suitable libraries, a method taken for granted in modern universities, and in our own science departments. And, finally, I have even heard it suggested that if Oxford ceased to exclude strangers and, like other universities, began to welcome them, it would cease to be a self-propagating university and become a self-renewing university.

Perhaps then, no more than any other university in Europe or America, would it need to be rehabilitated by the uncertain device of a Commission of Inquiry.

Quoting Stevens

May I add a footnote to your selection of Wallace Stevens' letters?

At the beginning and end of his letter to me [Encounter, October, p. 34] Wallace Stevens asks not to be quoted. I did not quote him in the symposium on Pound (1945). I did not quote him in *The Case of Ezra Pound*, a reprint of the symposium (1948). I did not quote him in my biography, *Ezra Pound* (1960). I am not quoting him in *United States v. Ezra Pound*, a complete documentary of the case, to be published next year.

Charles Norman

New York City

Major, Minor

Being myself of the most humble Jewish extraction, I am not particularly interested in titles and nobility —still more so, since most of the English writers and journalists have some strange habit of making a Count out of almost every Pole. Not so Paul Blanshard, who in his article "God, Theology and Love" [Encounter, September] describes the Radziwills—one of the first European families—as "minor Polish nobility." Certainly not "minor," but "major" and very much so.

(Dr.) M. Grydzewski,
Editor, "Wiadomosci"

London

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New York City

QUESTION: *Mr. Bennett Cerf, as a lifelong watchdog of our English language and publisher of a monumental dictionary, do you feel that the English spoken by modern U.S. Presidents is on a par with their exalted office? For instance, President Johnson recently told critics of his Viet Nam policy to "cool it"—the first time a slang word of dubious ancestry has crept into a major presidential address. Do you approve?*

ANSWER: *It's fine with me. Now's not the time for the President of the United States to worry about the King's English. After all, we're living in an informal age. Politicians don't go around in top hats anymore. There's no reason why the English language shouldn't wear sports clothes, too. I don't say the President should speak like an illiterate. But "cool it" is folksy, and the Chief Executive should be allowed to sound human. You can't be too corny for the American people—all the decent sentiments in life are corny. But linguistically speaking, Disraeli is dullsville.*

WASHINGTON STAR

New York City

THE PAST DECADE *of school improvements undoubtedly has led to greater literacy among high school graduates. But those who are afraid that the reform movement may be running out of work may want to reconsider after reading the response to a question by researchers of the American Council on Education which was sent to entering freshmen at 61 colleges and universities last fall. Asked to list their career choices, the students' choice replies included the following:*

"Sicology, denestry, metalergest, mathamatics, archetict and psyciartist. . . ."

Among the less scholarly goals were those of the "hosale sailsmen, augriculter, stewerdes, bussenius, airanatics and piolet. . . ."

One of the scholars admitted to being "undesided."

NEW YORK TIMES

Champaign, Illinois

CIVIL RIGHTS *activists among white college students have accepted the implications of "black power" far more readily than their elders or other white students. This was the consensus of delegates at the 19th congress of the National Student Association this week. It was also indicated that college students in general are less involved in civil rights work than they have been in recent years.*

A Hawaiian student of Japanese ancestry said: "Face it. The Big White Father bit is over."

One student said, "Civil rights was something beautiful because it did not use the methods every other minority had used to find its place in the sun. But this 'black power' bit, who needs it?"

One of the workshops at the student congress was entitled: "So I'm a White Liberal, What Do I Do Now?"

Students generally have been less stirred to help poor whites than to aid southern Negroes. "It was much easier to go down South than to do something at home," one student said, "Eating grits and no hot water were kind of a crutch, I suppose."

NEW YORK TIMES

New York City

LEROI JONES, *the playwright, waived examination in Criminal Court yesterday to await grand jury action in the assault and robbery case against him. Mr. Jones, the author of a number of anti-white plays, is accused of beating and robbing Shepard Sherbell, the 21-year-old editor of a literary magazine.*

The playwright was continued free in the $500 bail that had been posted for him by two friends, neither of them Allen Ginsberg, the poet. There had been an earlier report that the bail money for Mr. Jones had been put up by Mr. Ginsberg.

Mr. Sherbell attempted, before the case was called, to withdraw the charges against Mr. Jones but the District Attorney refused to permit the withdrawal. Mr. Sherbell had charged that the defendant and two unidentified men had struck and scratched him and had stolen his wallet with $15 in Greenwich Village.

The dispute between Mr. Jones and Mr. Sherbell was reportedly over payment by Mr. Sherbell's magazine, The East Side Review, *to Mr. Jones for the publication of one of his plays.*

Mr. Sherbell said he wanted to withdraw the complaint because "no matter what happens it is clear my property will not be returned" and because he didn't want to give Mr. Jones "ammunition with which to appeal to those who see rational logic and discussion as an unromantic way of dealing with reality."

NEW YORK TIMES

London

ACROSS *the Atlantic the language that divides us from the Americans is constantly throwing up new words and expressions of real value. True, it is just as constantly throwing up linguistic abortions and other horrors. Transportation adds nothing except length to transport. Motivation is no advance on cause or reason. And test out means nothing more than test. On the other hand, such expressions as kissing cousins, raincheck, and rubbernecking comprehend concepts as common here as in the United States, but we have coined no words that cover them so conveniently. If we need to express these ideas, we must borrow from the Americans.*

Perhaps, given time, some of the new immigrant peoples—the West Indians in particular—will begin to give our language just such an injection of vigour in a generation's time.

THE GUARDIAN

Minneapolis

A RESEARCH *psychologist is working on a new form of English that could improve man's ability to communicate with computers.*

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE

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Commentary

"An 'only in America' phenomenon . . .

If *Commentary* had not been blessed with extraordinarily good editors I suppose it would have turned into a worthy but lopsided publication, written by Jews and/or about Jews and/or about subjects of interest to Jews. Judaism is, and rightly, its central theme; yet . . . *Commentary* is concerned with all minorities, not least the Negro minority in the United States; with the Nazis and other forms of totalitarianism; with the pathology of the American South; with the politics, sociology and culture of urban life—in short, with most of the problems of our world."

Marcus Cunliffe
Encounter, August 1965

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EN-4

AUTHORS

William Christian Bullitt, who collaborated with Freud on the study of Woodrow Wilson, was born in Philadelphia in 1891. He graduated from Yale University and Harvard Law School.... In 1919 he was a young diplomat on the staff of the American Peace Commission in Paris, and was later sent by President Wilson on a special mission to Russia.... Mr. Bullitt was the first U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union (1933–36); he was also Ambassador to France (1936–41).... In 1944 he volunteered in the French Armed Services and served as Major, Infantry (*Croix de Guerre* with palm).... He is the author of several books, including *Report to the American People* (1940) and *The Great Globe Itself* (1946).... After the recent death of Mrs. Edith Galt Wilson (the President's widow), Mr. Bullitt—and Ernst Freud, representing the Freud family—agreed to release the manuscript which had been withheld from publication since the 'thirties....

Henry Fairlie's article forms part of his new book on *The Life of Politics* which Methuen will be publishing this year. Among his recent articles in ENCOUNTER are: "Tories Turning Left?" (September 1962), "On the Comforts of Anger" (July 1963), and the controversial transatlantic study of the Press, "Anglo-American Differences" (June 1966)....

Raymond Aron's new book, *Peace and War*, is shortly to be published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson.... **John K. Fairbank's** article in our December "New Asia" number was indebted to an international conference on the Chinese World Order held under Harvard auspices in September 1965....

The **Medawar** and **Shils** articles on "The Sanctity of Life" were based on papers originally presented at a conference at Reed College, Oregon....

Ihab Hassan is Director of the College of Letters at Wesleyan University, Connecticut, and is the author of *Radical Innocence* (1961) .... **G. S. Fraser's** book on *The Modern Writer and His World* (1952) has recently been revised for the Penguin edition.... **Maurice Cranston** is Reader in Political Science at the London School of Economics and is the author of *Freedom* (1953) and *John Locke* (1957).

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